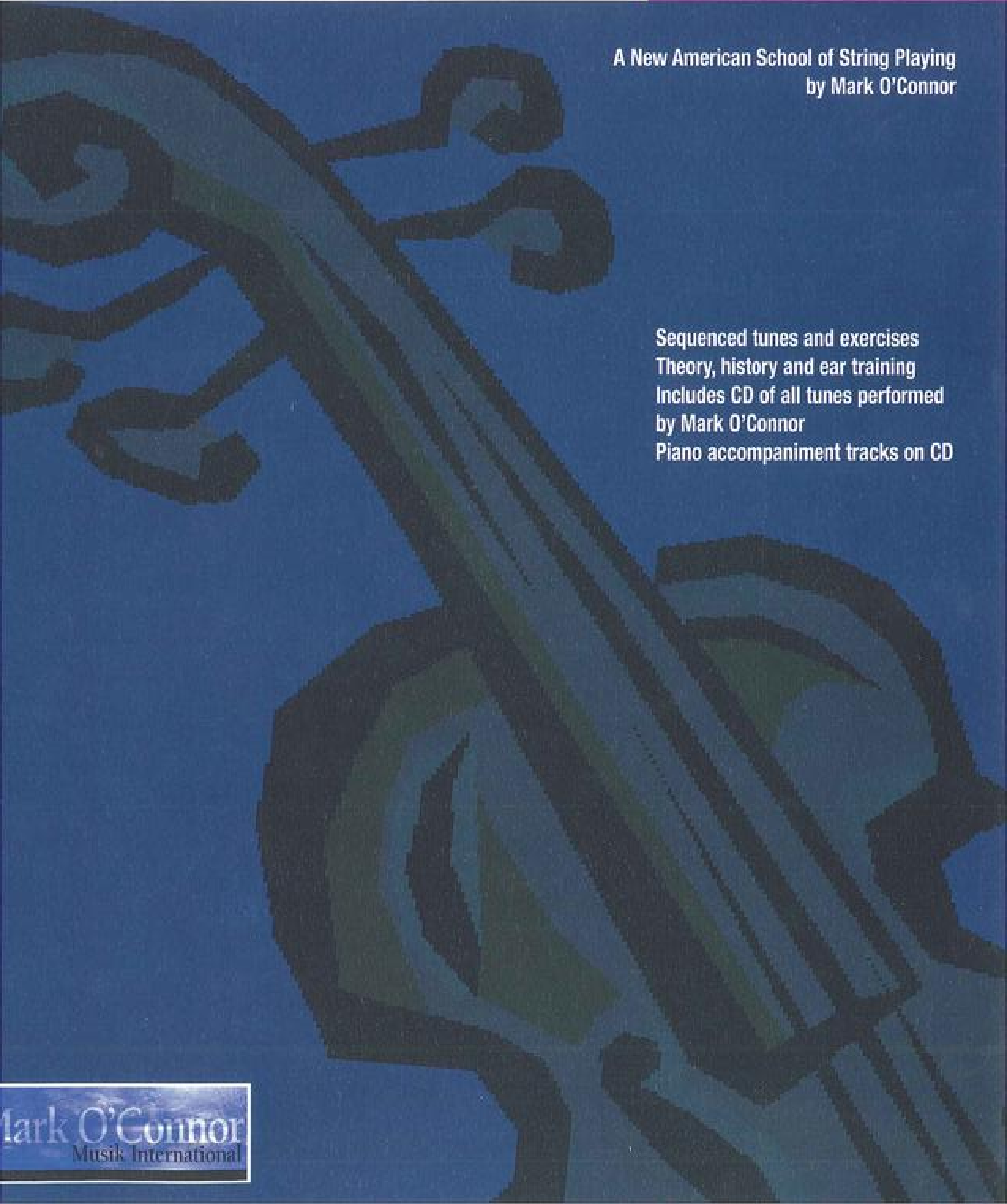O'CONNOR Violin Method

VIOLIN BOOK I



A New American School of String Playing
by Mark O'Connor

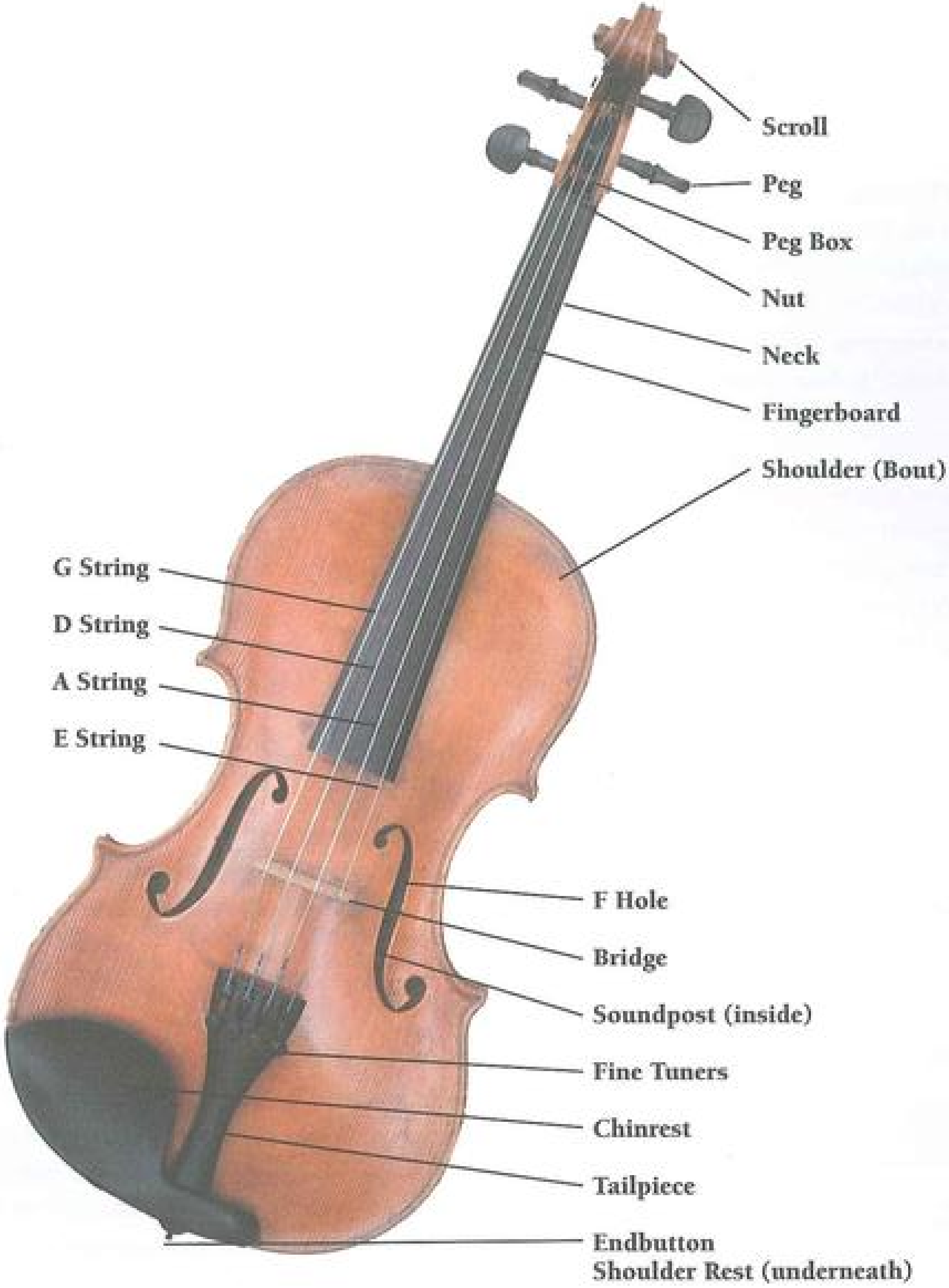
Sequenced tunes and exercises
Theory, history and ear training
Includes CD of all tunes performed by Mark O'Connor
Piano accompaniment tracks on CD

Mark O'Connor Musik International

CONTENTS

VIOLIN METHOD BOOK I

PARTS OF THE VIOLIN





FOREWORD

O'CONNOR Violin Method

I am pleased to introduce the O'Connor Violin Method for string teachers and students of the violin. This 10-Book series is designed to guide students gradually through the development of pedagogical and musical techniques necessary to become proficient, well-rounded musicians through a carefully planned progression of pieces. Gradual development of left-hand technique, bowing skill and ear training as revealed through the study of beautiful music encourages a love of music-making in a slow, steady and natural way.

The music that I have collected for the O'Connor Violin Method Books I & II includes some of the most endearing melodies in American music as well as some of the great folk fiddle tunes that have endured our 400 year-old history of violin playing. I have made it a specific feature of the Method to include musical literature that represents all of the Americas – Mexico, Canada and every region of the United States – and so many musical styles – classical, folk, Latin, jazz, rock, ragtime, etc. I have chosen and arranged material that will be both instructive and artistically enriching, and will help create the future classical violinist, folk fiddler, jazz musician - or all three!

The Method Books I & II take into consideration that, even at the beginning levels, learning music possessing a timeless quality is a healthy vehicle for engendering a lifelong love of music-making. Beginner tunes can be great tunes, and could very well stay with the student for a lifetime of playing and performing. In my own experience giving classes around the country, I often tell students that I have professionally recorded three of the first fiddle tunes I learned as a child. All three – *Soldier's Joy, Arkansas Traveler,* and *Fiddler's Dream* – are presented early in this Method. I believe there are no throw-aways. The beginning tunes are built to last, providing a sturdy foundation and core for the novice. The tune that I have arranged to provide the most rudimentary studies for a beginning violinist – *Boil `em Cabbage Down* – is the first fiddle tune I learned as a child.

In the early books, students will learn simplified arrangements of more advanced music which will appear later in the Method. Many of my own compositions such as *Appalachia Waltz* and *The Fiddle Concerto*, appear in the early books in a form accessible to beginners. Students revisiting these and other pieces at a higher technical and musical level some years down the road will find themselves coming full circle with their own earliest years of wonderment and fascination with the violin.

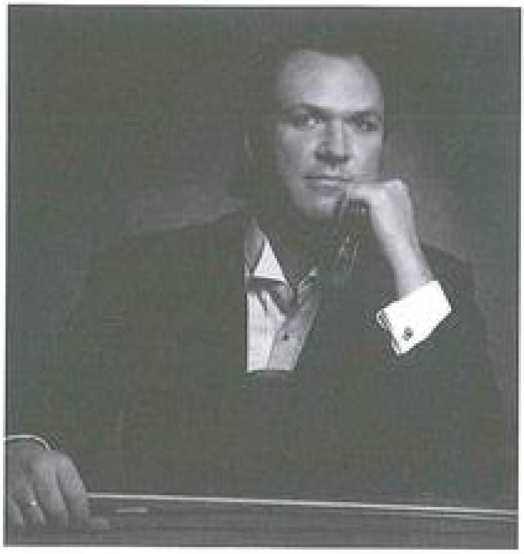
My travels of the past 30 years have convinced me that a new American Classical Music is evolving. I have encountered thousands of students of all ages and abilities at concerts, workshops, college/conservatory/university seminars and fiddle camps and have found repeatedly that students do not want to be "left out" of the great sounds and energy of fiddling and jazz because they wish to become fine classical players. It is my firm belief that the new American Classical Music will embrace the totality of our rich history of violin playing, and it is my sincere hope that my Method will further this process and perpetuate love for the violin.



Mark O'Connor

(New York City, 2009)

MARK O'CONNOR



A product of America's rich aural folk tradition as well as being a Classical and Flamenco music student in his formative years, violinist and composer Mark O'Connor is widely recognized as one of the most gifted contemporary composers in America and surely one of the brightest talents of his generation. Mr. O'Connor's creative journey began at the feet of the folk fiddler and innovator who created the modern era of American fiddling in the 1940s, Benny Thomasson, and a French jazz violinist who was considered one of the greatest improvisers in the history of the violin, Stephane Grappelli. Along the way, between these marvelous musical extremes, Mark O'Connor absorbed knowledge and influence from the multitude of musical styles and genres he studied. Now, at age 48, he has melded and shaped these influences into a new American Classical music, and is perpetuating his vision of an American School of string playing. The New York Times calls his "one of the most spectacular journeys in recent American music." The Los Angeles Times describes him as an artist who is "one of the most talented and imaginative...working in music -- any music -- today."

One of the most-recorded violinists in many genres, Mr. O'Connor's first recording for the Sony Classical record label, *Appalachia Waltz*, was a collaboration with Yo-Yo Ma and Edgar Meyer. The works Mr. O'Connor composed for the disc, including its title track, gained worldwide recognition for him as a leading proponent of a new American musical idiom. The tremendously successful follow-up release, *Appalachian Journey*, received a Grammy Award in February 2001.

With more than 200 performances, his first full length orchestral score *The Fiddle Concerto* has become the most-performed violin concerto composed in the last 40 years. In April 2000, Mr. O'Connor premiered his 4th violin concerto *The American Seasons: Seasons of an American Life*, at Troy Music Hall in Troy, N.Y. The New York Times said "...if Dvorak had spent his American leisure time in Nashville instead of Spillville, Iowa, 'New World Symphony' would have sounded like this." The American Seasons was recorded with the Metamorphosen chamber orchestra and released in 2001.

Mr. O'Connor received a commission from fifteen symphony orchestras in 2007 to compose his *Americana Symphony* recorded by the Baltimore Symphony in 2008. Mark O'Connor has performed his compositions in concert at The White House, the Presidential Inauguration Celebration and the ceremonies of Atlanta's Centennial Olympic Games for which he composed *Olympic Reel*. He is often featured on major network television shows, and past appearances include "CBS Sunday Morning," "Great Performances" on PBS, and the "Kennedy Center Honors."

Mr. O'Connor regularly conducts residencies, giving lecture/demonstrations and teaching workshops, at many prestigious schools of music. Mr. O'Connor was the inaugural Herb Alpert School Of Music Artist in Residence at UCLA for the 2008-2009 season and is the Frost School of Music Artist in Residence at the University of Miami for the 2009-2010 season. Mr. O'Connor generously donates his time in support of a number of organizations that promote music education and outreach, including Opus 118, Midori and Friends and Sphinx. He serves on the advisory panel for the selection of the Kennedy Center Honors. He is the founder and president of the internationally recognized Mark O'Connor String Camp and Fiddle Camp attracting an average of 400 students from around the world annually. Mr. O'Connor was born in Seattle in 1961 and currently resides in New York City.

EIGHT PRINCIPLES OF THE O'CONNOR VIOLIN METHOD

O'CONNOR Violin Method

1. **LISTENING.** Listen to my lesson reference recording every day. Development of good violin-playing depends upon ear training. Sing or hum the pieces, with or without the words. Listen to your favorite musicians play their music.

2. **PRACTICE.** Try to practice daily. There is no substitute for time with the instrument. This Method is accessible to students 3 years old and older (beginners of any age can start with my Book I). A good rule of thumb for practice is 5 minutes per day for each year old you are until you reach 12 years old. An hour every day will produce steady progress. More practice time will produce even more rapid development of physical skill and artistic sensitivity.

3. **PROGRESSION.** Study the pieces in the order presented. The tunes are organized in a carefully planned sequence designed to layer new skills on top of established ones. Keep playing all the material learned. This Method is cumulative not just linear. Practice a piece until it is "easy," not just until you believe it is "correct."

4. **EXERCISING.** Pedagogical exercises should accompany the study of each piece. Some of these materials are included in the "learning pages" as well as in diagrams throughout the book. Your teacher will also help you locate the points of advancement in each piece and help you create exercises or "practice spots" where needed. Fingerings are provided in the early pieces (4th finger v. open string recommendations are provided throughout).

5. **PERFORMANCE.** Play along with my reference recording. Music is a language and is best learned by imitating someone who speaks the language often like I do. Copying my intonation, tone and phrasing will develop a good foundation for future interpretations or creativity of your own. Piano accompaniment tracks are also included on my reference recording to develop independent control of the solo line and the ability to play with others. These tracks can also be used as accompaniment for performances when live accompaniment is not available. The piano accompaniment sheet music is available as well.

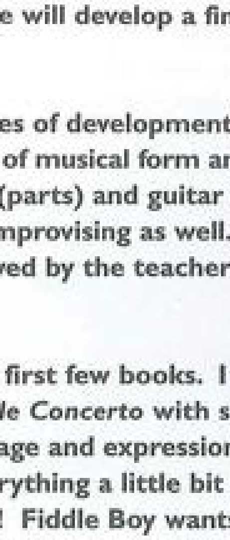
6. **RELEVANCE.** Become familiar with the historical background presented with each piece. Acquiring an understanding of the many styles of music that comprise our rich and diverse musical heritage provides relevance to our own musical development. Students who establish this habit at an early age will develop a fine knowledge of music history and appreciation, and will become more complete musicians.

7. **CREATIVITY.** Individual creativity is encouraged from the very earliest stages of development by the inclusion of improvisation suggestions/exercises on the learning pages. The understanding of musical form and how a piece is structured is aided by the addition of enclosed rehearsal letters, double bars (parts) and guitar chord symbols (harmonic progression). This becomes very important in the development of improvising as well. Acquiring a sense of harmony is also aided by the addition of duet parts which can be played by the teacher or a more advanced student.

8. **EXPRESSION.** Get to know Fiddle Boy. He shows up now and then in the first few books. I formed this caricature years ago to help me describe what it was like to perform *The Fiddle Concerto* with symphony orchestras all over America. I found myself wanting to communicate the language and expression of the music as well as the notes and techniques. He is a little buddy, a helper, who does everything a little bit differently. He loves to express himself as you can see from his funny hair and playing style! Fiddle Boy wants to help you discover the emotions of pieces so that you can eventually express your own feelings in music that you have learned.

Mark O'Connor (2009)

"Hello! I really love the violin, and I am so happy you are here to join us. I hope you will love the violin too!"





Place the neck of the violin in your left hand. Holding the neck of the violin in your left hand, move your hand and fingers around the neck to know how it feels.

Hold the violin like a guitar with the back against your stomach. Pluck the strings with your right thumb away from the area where the bow goes because your fingers have oily skin and you need the bowing area to remain sticky for your bow hair. As you pluck the strings with your thumb, feel the back of the violin vibrate on your stomach. Does that make you smile?



Lay your left-hand fingers across the strings. Feel what it is like to have all four strings against the insides of your fingers.

Now place the violin on top of your left shoulder. Turn your head to the left, point your nose to the scroll and place the left side of your chin comfortably into the violin's chinrest. Feel how your head, neck, shoulder and chin embrace the violin.

Cradle the violin neck with your left thumb to the back of the neck and your fingers in the front. Feel the arch where the violin neck turns into the scroll. Now lower your hand slightly creating a small space between this arch and your hand. Support the weight of the violin with the weight of your head and the top of your shoulder. Find a balance where it becomes unnecessary to prop the violin up with your left hand.





Now arch your fingers creating a rainbow. Lift the fingers slightly and then drop your 2nd finger down on to the "A" string. Let your finger drop so the string hits the middle of your finger and your finger is clear of the other strings. Feel the string as you place your finger there. Feel the fingertip on the string and on the fingerboard underneath as you hold it there.

FEELING THE VIOLIN



Try dropping your arched 3rd finger onto the "A" string while lifting the 2nd finger at the same time. Feel the energy exchanging between the fingers as you change from the 2nd finger to the 3rd. Then try this with all your fingers, one at a time.

Now try another string, a lower string. Feel how it is different against your fingertip? The larger and wider strings make a lower, warmer sound. The "E" string feels thin. Its sound is high and bright. Do you feel the difference with your fingertips?

Pick up the bow, being careful not to touch the bow hair with oily fingers, and tighten the hair. Turn the screw until the hair is separated from the stick just enough to put a pencil between the hair and the stick. Feel the tension increase on the bow hair and stick as you tighten the screw.



Balance the bow on one of the strings about half way between the frog and the tip. Feel how you hold the bow with your right hand. Drape your right hand on top of the stick over the frog with small spaces between your fingers. Feel your thumb and each finger and how they touch the bow and frog in order to guide the bow across the strings.



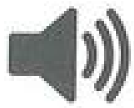


Practice long up and down bow strokes the full length of the bow. Make sure the bow hair is flat on the string and stays a consistent distance from the bridge. Notice how you hold the bow in your hand and how your wrist and arm allow you to apply more weight on the string to increase the sound volume. Can you feel the vibrations of the strings coming through the bow? Continue your long bow strokes while using a flexible wrist that flows with each bow stroke. Can you feel that your right hand is a "connector" between your arm and the strings?

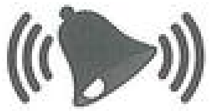
Don't the violin and bow feel wonderful in your hands?

Mark O'Connor (2009)

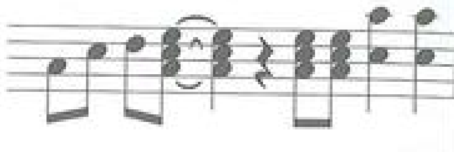
SOUND = something you hear.



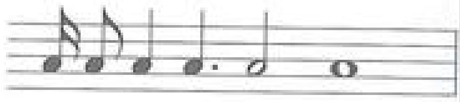
TONE = musical sound.



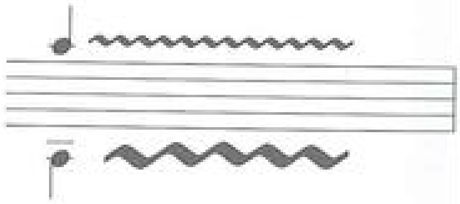
MUSIC = instrumental and vocal sounds having rhythm, melody and/or harmony.



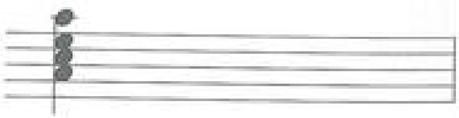
NOTE = musical symbol describing the length and pitch of a tone.



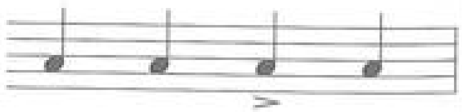
PITCH = the position of a tone in a musical scale determined by its rate of vibrations.



HARMONY/CHORDS = combination of musical notes.



ACCENT = making the beginning of a musical note sound louder.



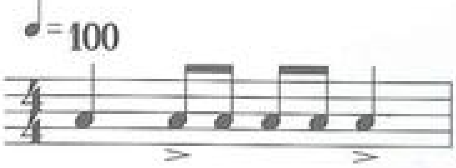
TEMPO = rate of speed of a musical piece.

♩ = 150 or 𝅗𝅥 = 100

METER = beats per measure in music.
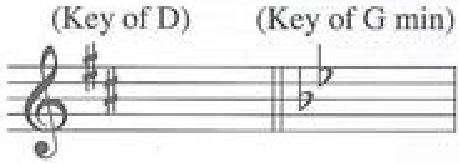


RHYTHM = accent, meter, and tempo in music.



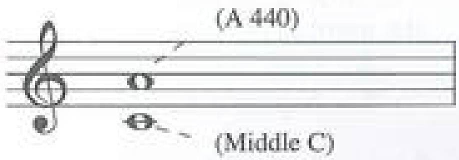
TUNE/MELODY = theme, pleasing sequence of notes.



KEY = a system of tones and harmonies.



TUNING STANDARD = "A" note above middle "C" (440 vibrations per second).



INTERVAL = relationship between pitches.



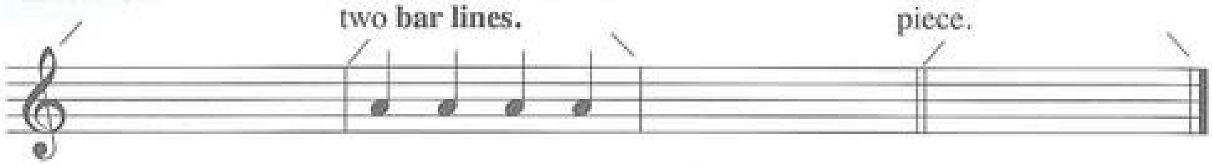
MUSICAL NOTATION

The **staff/stave** consists of 5 lines and 4 spaces on which music is written.

Treble Clef

A **measure** or **bar** is a unit of music between two **bar lines.**

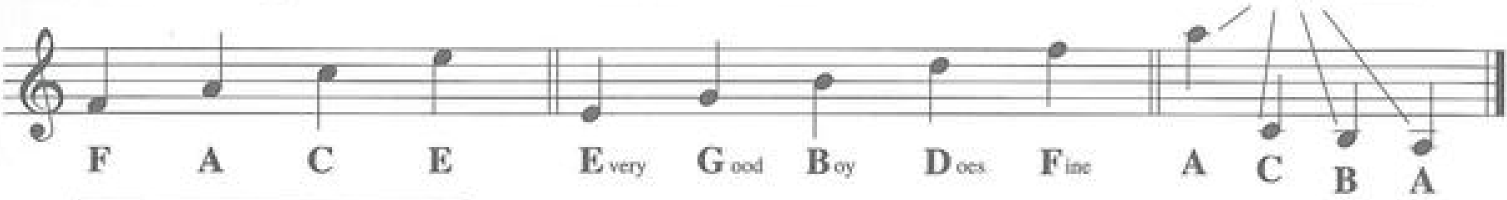
A **double bar** indicates the end of a section or piece.



Notes in the spaces

Notes on the lines

Ledger Lines



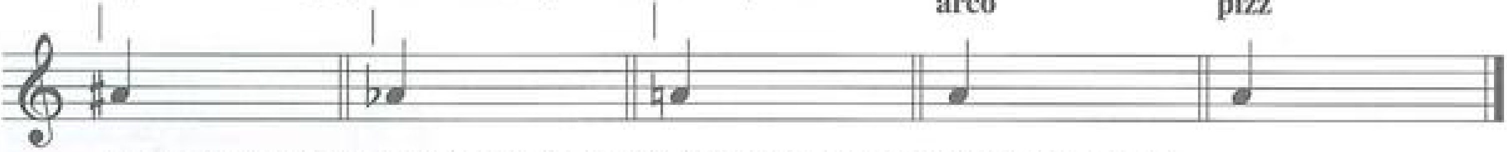
A **sharp** raises the pitch a half step.

A **flat** lowers the pitch a half step.

A **natural** cancels out a sharp or flat.

To bow the string **arco**

To pluck the string **pizz**



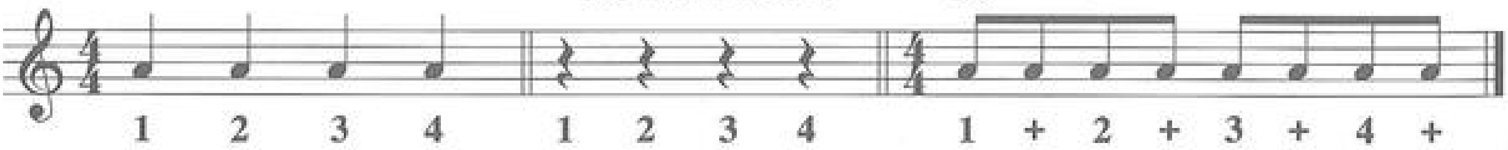
Sharps, flats and naturals carry through the rest of the measure in which they appear.

The **time signature** or **meter** indicates the number of beats per measure.
4 = Four beats to a measure.
4 = A quarter note receives one beat.

A **quarter rest** receives one beat of silence.

Tempo markings indicate how fast or slow a piece should be played. Ex: Quarter notes should be played one note per click at setting 90 on a metronome.
Eighth notes - 2 notes per click.

♩= 90 *Lively*
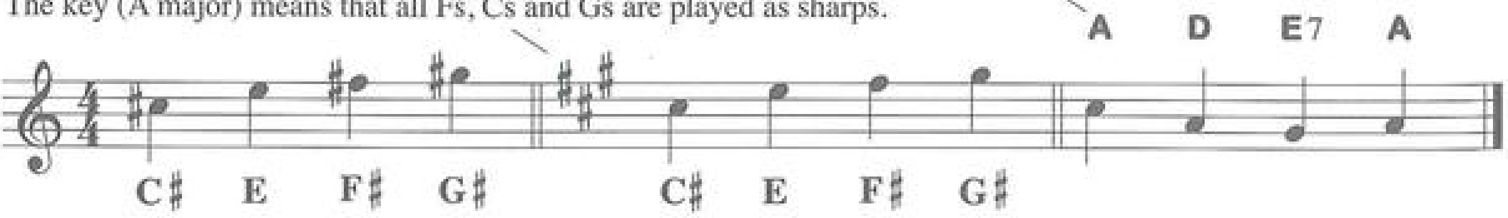


A **quarter note** receives one beat.

Quarter notes can be subdivided into **eighth notes**. Each eighth note receives a half beat.

A **key signature** is a group of sharps and flats that appear at the beginning of the staff/stave to indicate which notes will be played sharp or flat. The key (A major) means that all Fs, Cs and Gs are played as sharps.

A **Chord symbol** indicates the type of chord to use to accompany.



TONE AND SOUND
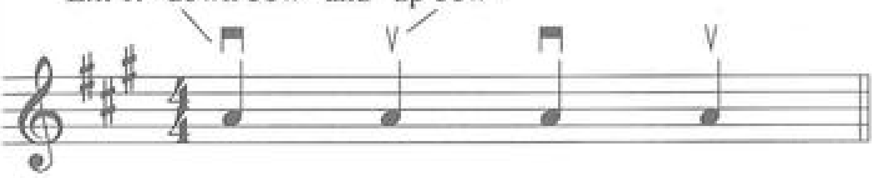
To play with good "tone" and sound, listen to the bow on the string and try to play without sounding scratchy.

Practice with a nice smooth bowing motion, in a way that sounds beautiful. When you change directions with the bow (down - up - down), do it smoothly and easily.

Stand up straight with good posture, and with your violin comfortably under your chin and placed on your left shoulder. Draw the bow across the strings softly and then repeat it loudly all with a flexible right bow arm and wrist.
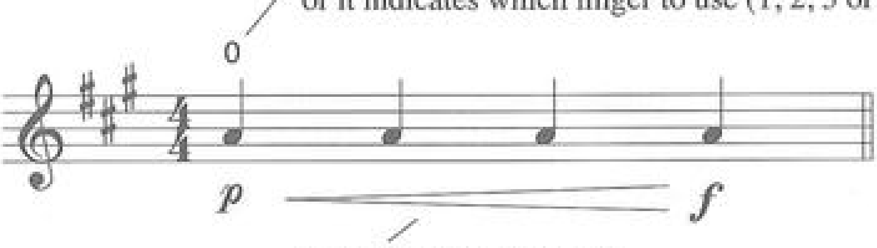
Try to find a nice tone that resonates, where the note is clear and has a singing quality.

Ex. 1: "down bow" and "up bow"

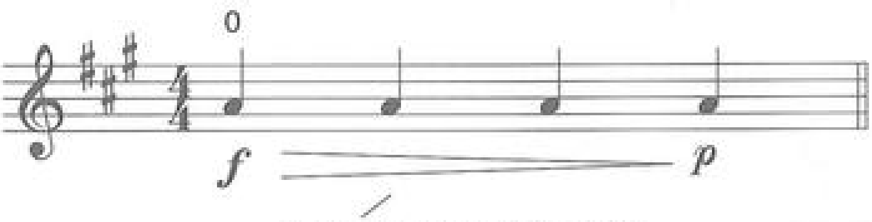


Ex. 1 -- The "down bow" sign tells you to move the bow to the right, and the "up bow" to the left.

This number tells you to play the open string or it indicates which finger to use (1, 2, 3 or 4).



Crescendo (soft to loud)



Decrescendo (loud to soft)

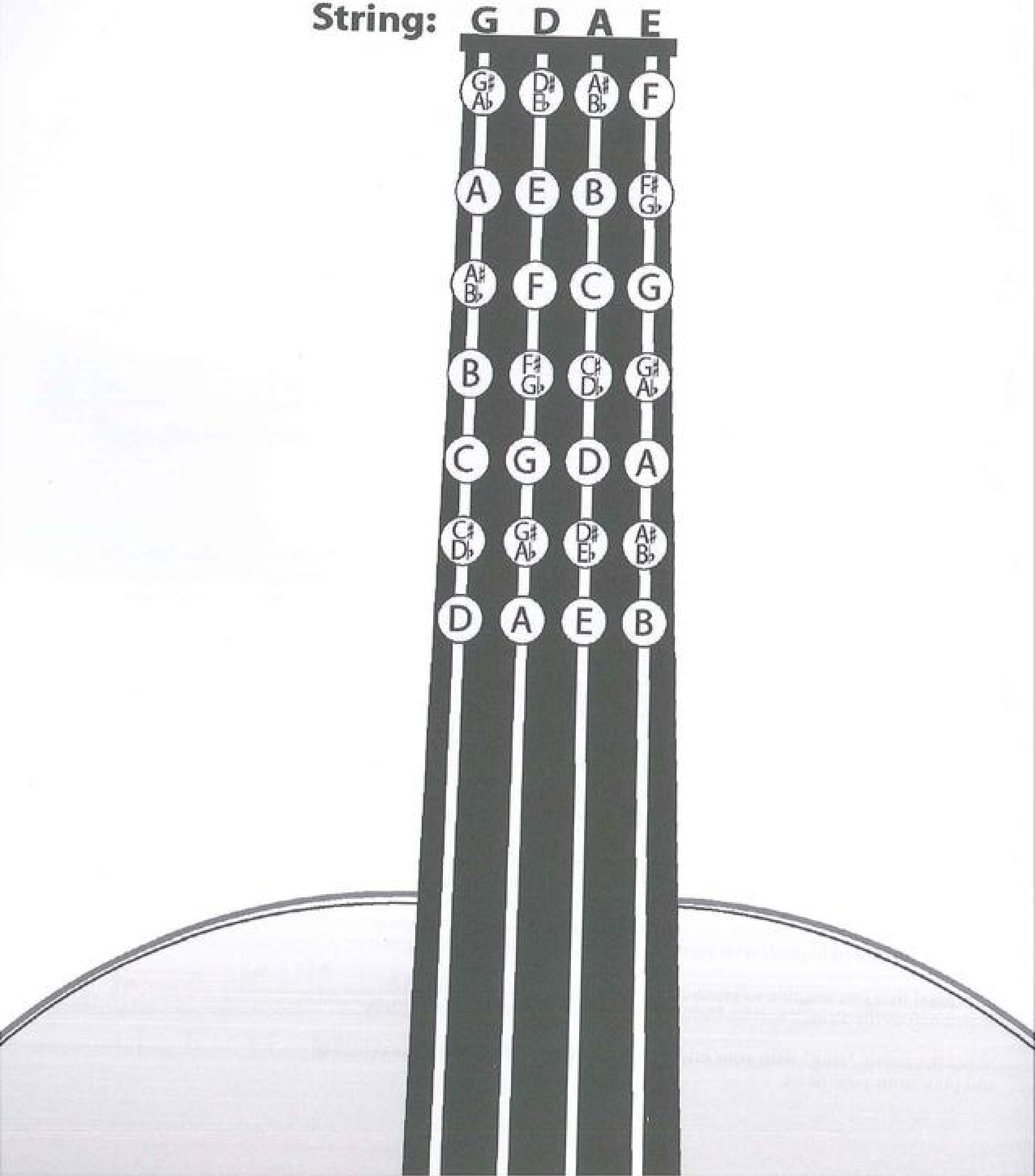
Always stand up straight when you get ready to play, use good posture.

Take a couple of deep breaths and put the violin under your chin, and over your left shoulder make sure the violin is level to the floor.

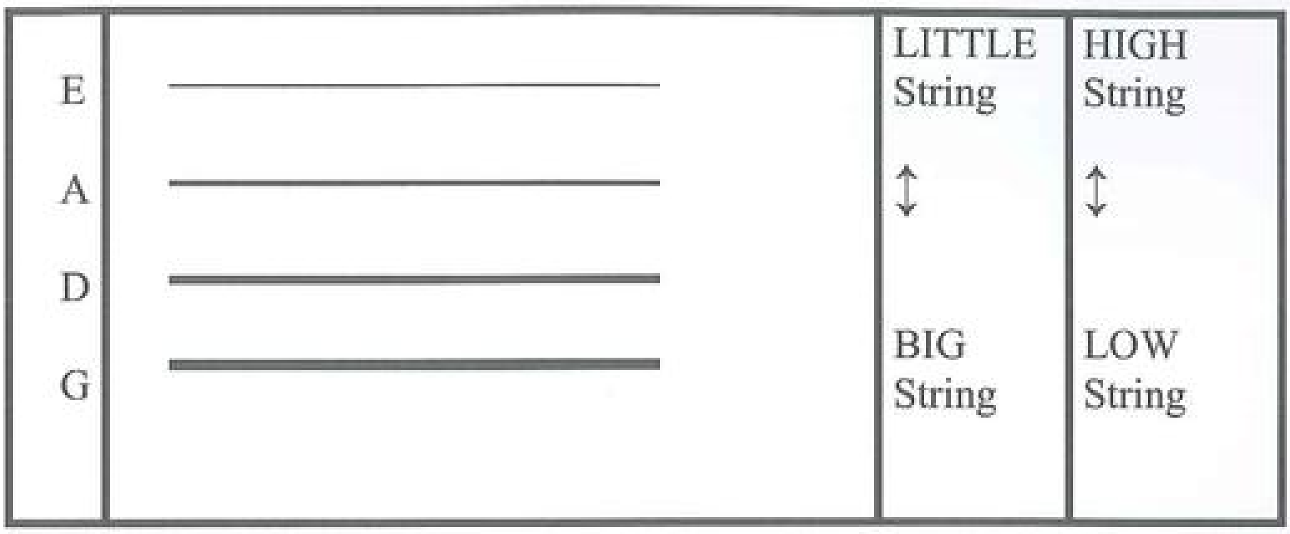
Play with a beautiful sound quality. Try to find good intonation with each note and find the right pitch with your left fingers. Carefully find the pitch.

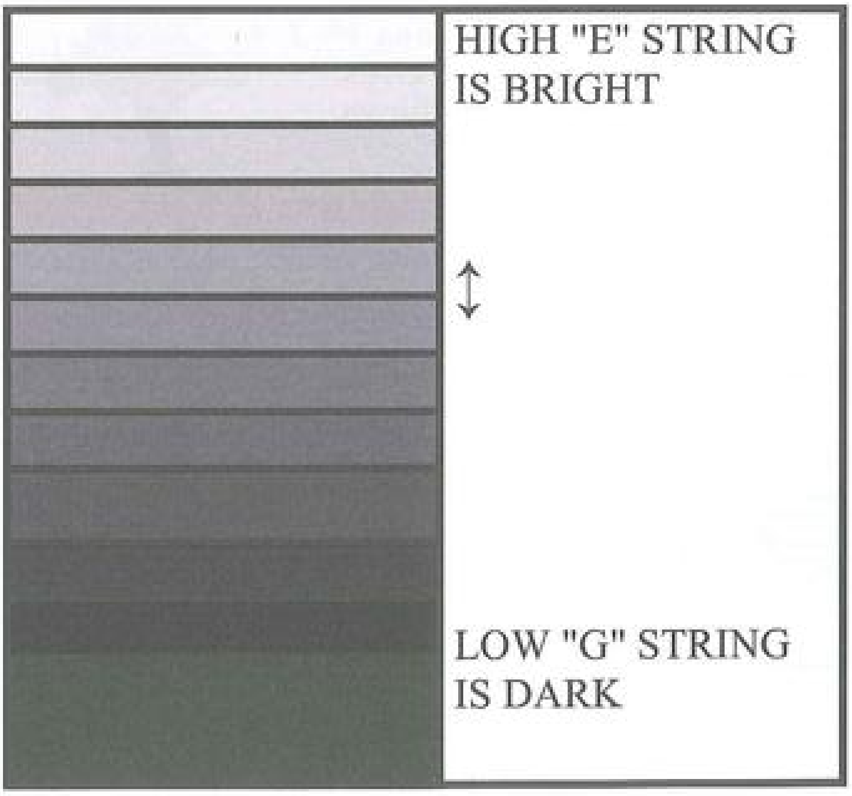
Feel good that you are able to produce a wonderful violin tone. The bow drawn across the strings excites them and makes them resonate beautifully.

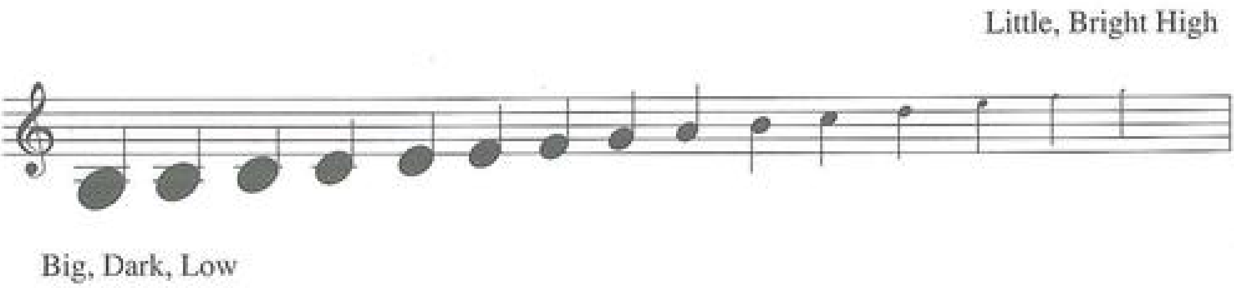
Make the music "sing" with your bow and your fingers. Play with a good feeling and play from your heart.


String: G D A E
G♯ A♭ D♯ E♭ A♯ B♭ F
A E B F♯ G♭
A♯ B♭ F C G
B F♯ G♭ C♯ D♭ G♯ A♭
C G D A
C♯ D♭ G♯ A♭ D♯ E♭ A♯ B♭
D A E B

STRINGS OF THE VIOLIN



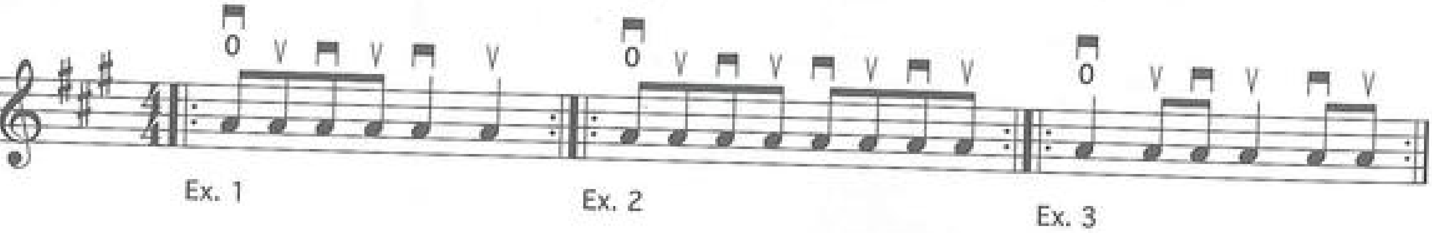




"Before we start on our first tune, spend a few weeks learning to hold the violin and bow, and learning to bow the open strings. Use the bowings and rhythms from Boil `em Cabbage Down Variations 1 - 3 on open strings for your exercises. After you accomplish these things, we are ready to begin our first tune on page 1!"



Slow Tempo: Play the open "A" string.
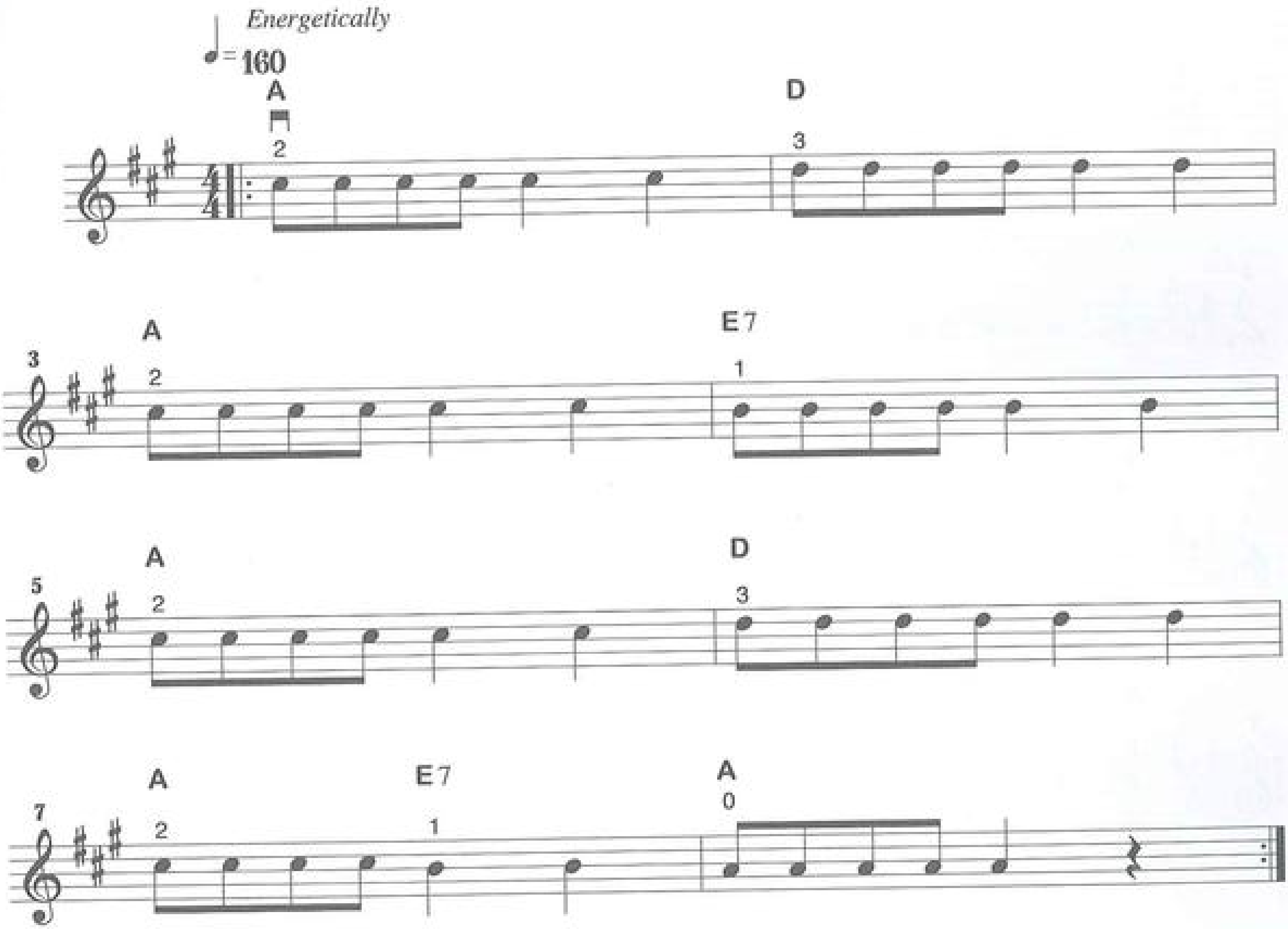


Boil `em Cabbage Down

(Variation 1)

Book I

Violin-Track 2
Piano-Track 25

American Folk Song
Arr. by Mark O'Connor



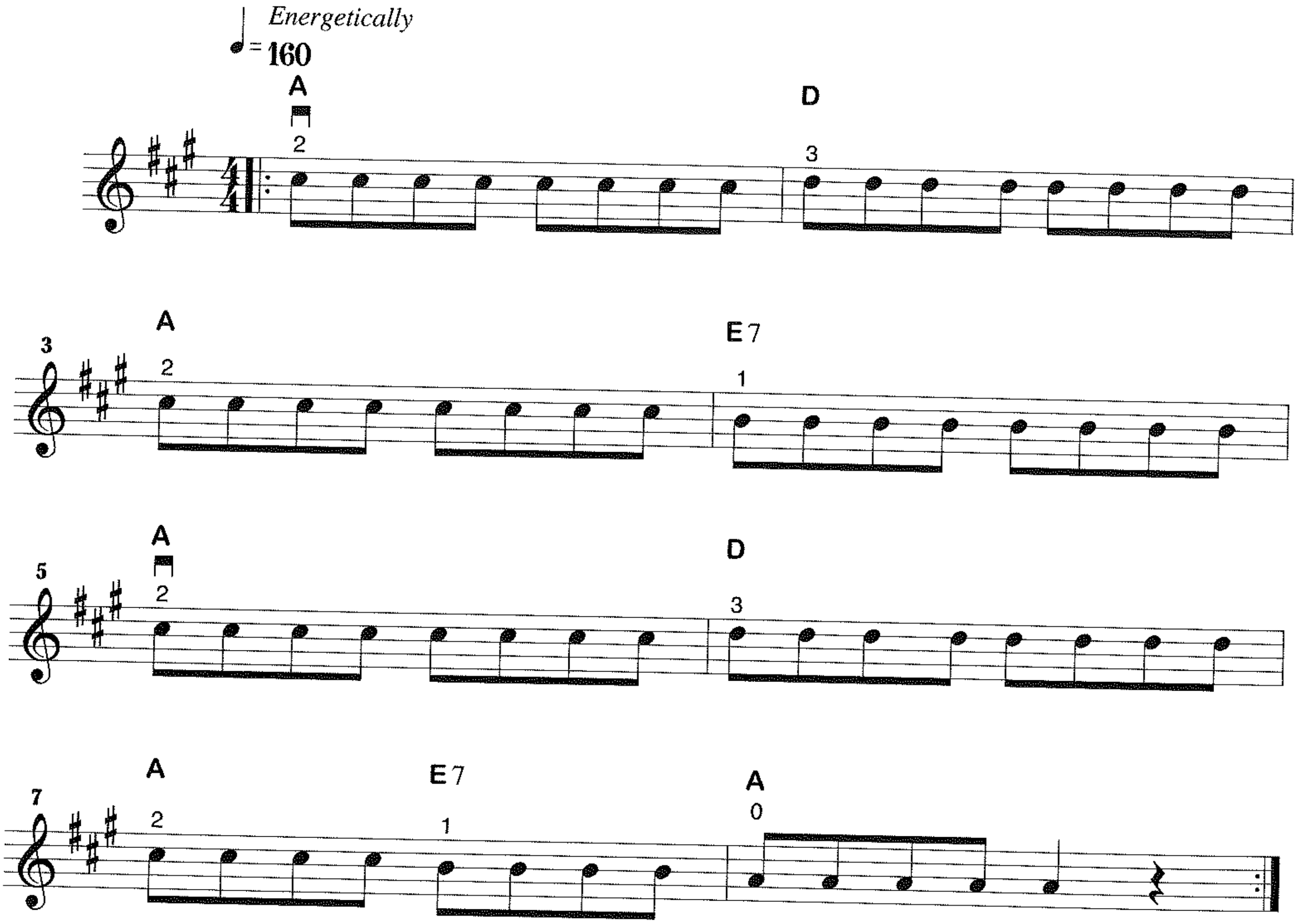
Boil `em Cabbage Down

(Variation 2)

Book I

Violin-Track 3
Piano-Track 26

American Folk Song
Arr. by Mark O'Connor
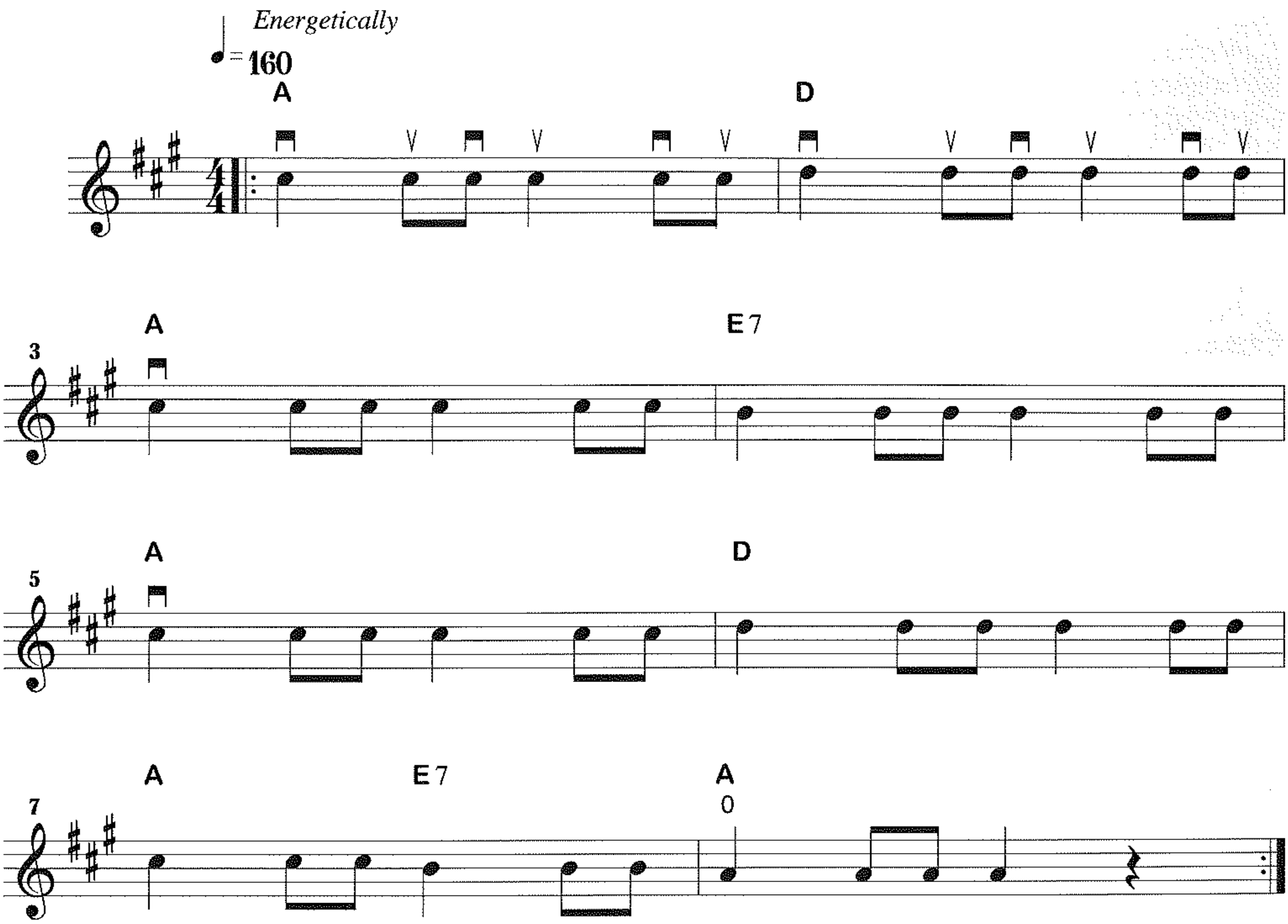


Boil `em Cabbage Down

(Variation 3)

Book I

Violin-Track 4
Piano-Track 27

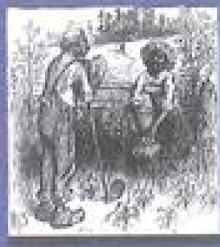
American Folk Song
Arr. by Mark O'Connor



"Boil `em Cabbage Down" is an African American hoedown. The tune has roots reaching all the way to the African slaves that were brought to the southern part of the United States almost 400 hundred years ago. Africans played "bowed" string instruments that resembled the fiddle, so they found the violin to be a familiar instrument. African American fiddlers played with percussive effects and rhythmic bowings derived from their musical culture. Early African American and European American fiddlers created the "hoedown" by combining African string playing and Scotch/Irish "reels."

The title "Boil `em Cabbage Down" speaks of cooking cabbage by boiling it. "Cabbage" could have meant any leafy green vegetable such as collards, kale etc. The Southern style of cooking "greens" that have been cooked down into a gravy came with the arrival of the African slaves to the southern colonies. They boiled these greens down until they were soft, smoothing out their bitter flavor, and created the famous "southern greens." The chorus of the tune also contains the term "hoe-cake." This refers to a bread that African American field workers cooked in a round skillet or on the blade of a shovel (hoe) held over a fire like a griddle.

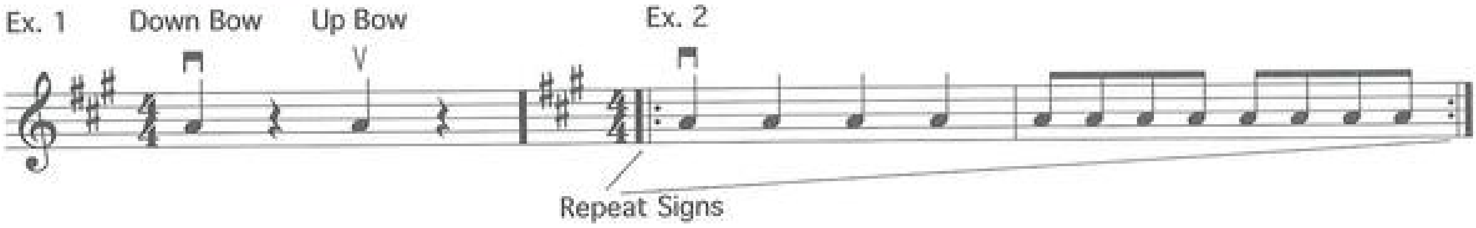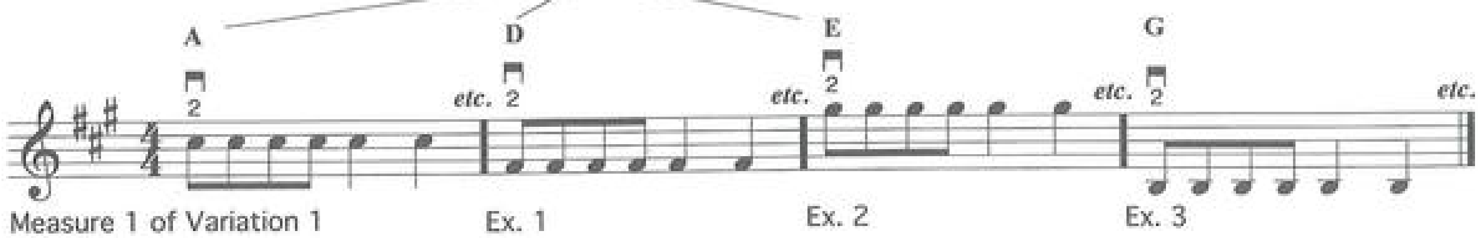




Key of "A" Major

Theory: Ex. 1 - The **4/4 time signature** ($\frac{4}{4}$) indicates that there are four beats per measure with a quarter note receiving one beat. The **key of A major** has three sharps, which means that the notes of C, F and G are played C#, F# and G#. The **down bow** sign (⊓) tells you to move the bow to the right, and the **up bow** (v) to the left.

Ex. 2 - Contains quarter notes (♩) and eighth notes (♪). A **right-facing repeat sign** and the **left-facing repeat sign** tell you to repeat the music between those repeat signs.



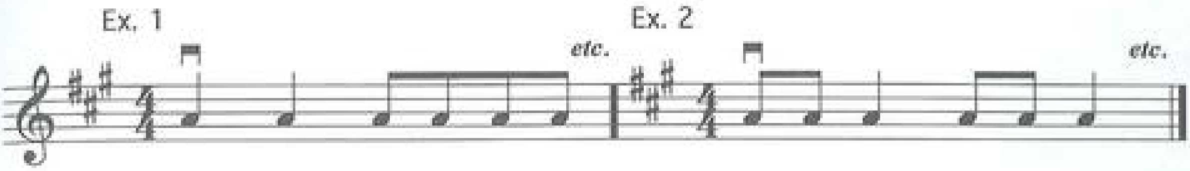
Ear Training/Improvisation: After you learn *Variation 1*, play it on other strings starting on the 2nd finger. Ex. 1-3 are in different keys and the **chord symbols** above each measure indicate the key you are playing in.



LEARNING BOIL `EM CABBAGE DOWN

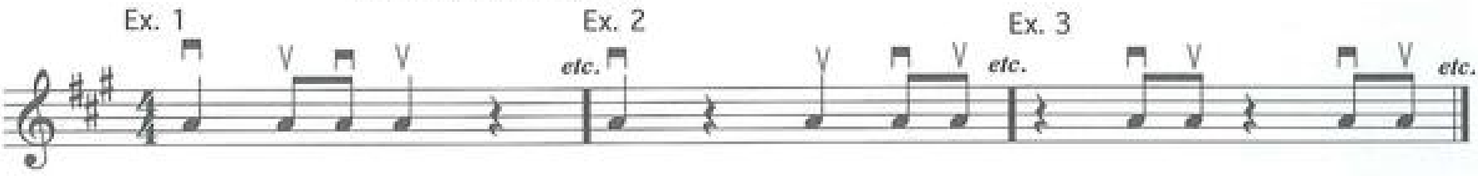
Boil 'em Cabbage Down - Variation 2

Ear Training/Improvisation: After you learn *Variation 2,* play it using a different rhythm that you create. Examples 1 and 2 will give you some ideas for new rhythms.

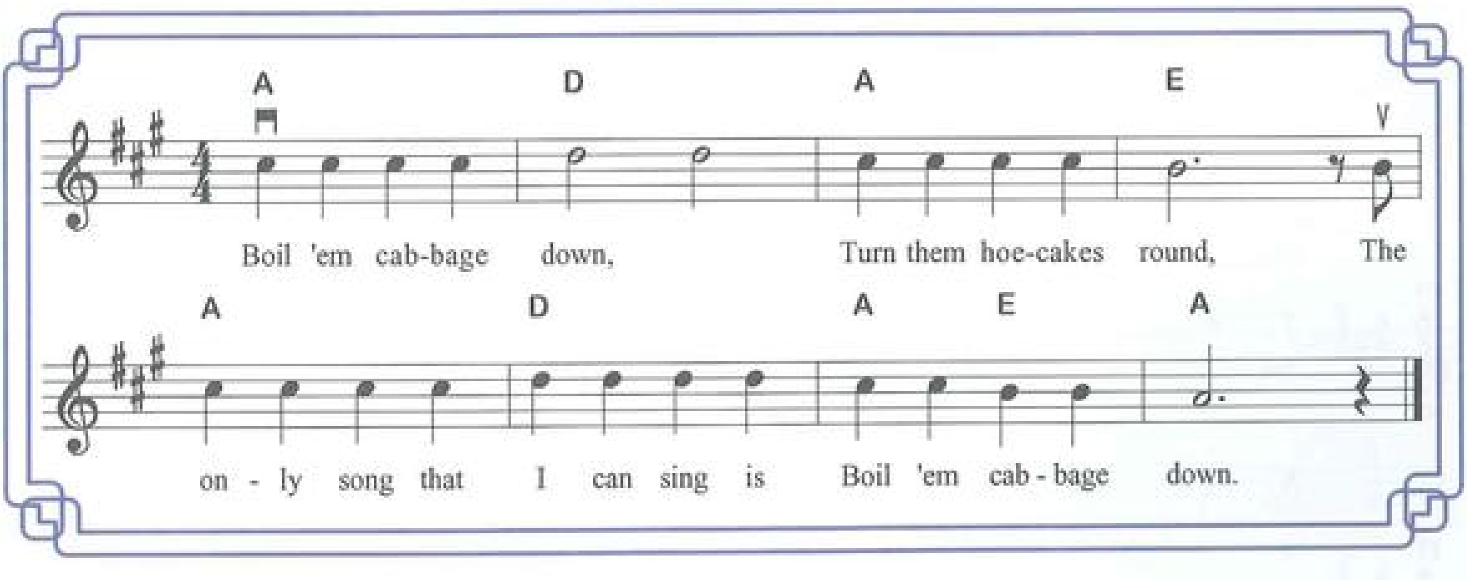


Boil 'em Cabbage Down - Variation 3

Ear Training/Improvisation: Ex. 1-3 - After you learn *Variation 3,* play it again using **quarter rests** (𝄽) or "silent spaces" to change the rhythm.



VARIATION WITH ORIGINAL LYRICS



"If you ask me, Boil `em Cabbage Down smells like good southern cooking!"



Listen to me play this on the recording. Take a deep breath. Get in good position, concentrate and play in tune with a nice sound.
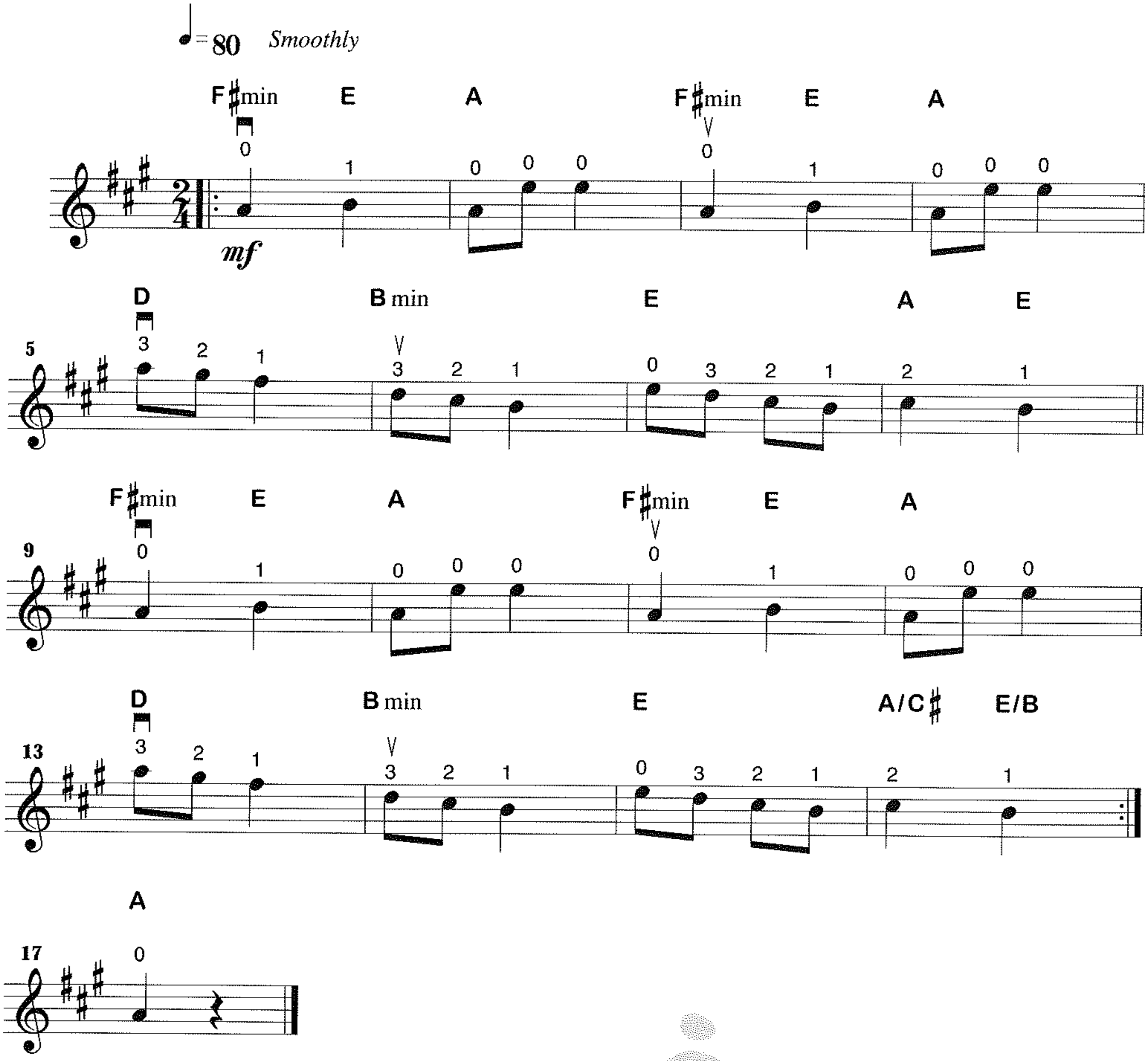
How does this music make you feel? (Joyful, Cheerful, Like Dancing or Eating Greens)

Beautiful Skies

Book I

Violin-Track 5
Piano-Track 28

Mark O'Connor



LEARNING BEAUTIFUL SKIES
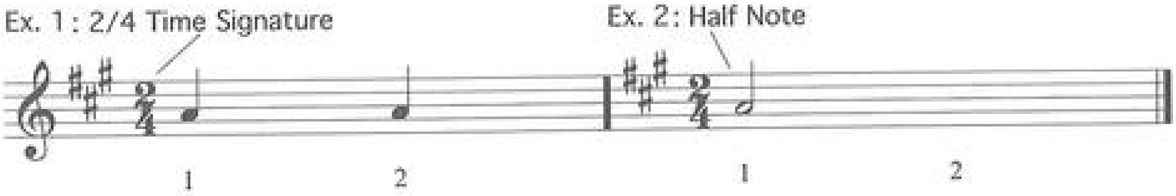


I love the sky. Especially when it turns to one of my favorite colors ever, the color of blue. The sky is so big and majestic, that I wanted to write music about the beautiful blue sky.

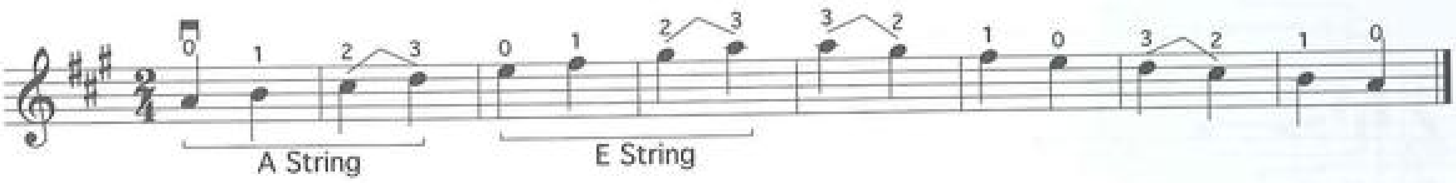
Sometimes I just want to stretch my arms out wide and try to reach the sky. I know that I can't, but it is so much fun trying to. We can play the violin outside while underneath the sky, and play beautiful music. For me, that is when I feel I can finally reach the Beautiful Skies.



Theory: Ex. 1 - The **2/4 time signature** ($\frac{2}{4}$) indicates two beats per measure with a quarter note receiving one beat.
Ex. 2 - **Half notes** (𝅗𝅥) receive two beats.

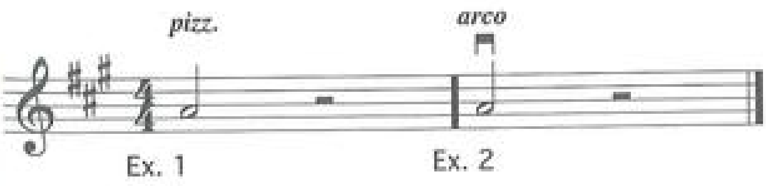


The **A major scale** has three sharps. **Scales** are made up of a series of **whole steps** and **half steps.** A half step is the smallest interval commonly used. The sound of the half step is the sound of two adjacent keys on the piano and is usually played by two fingers touching each other on the violin. A whole step equals two half steps. The half steps are marked with connecting lines. Keep your fingers close to the string as you play.



Ear Training/Improvisation: **Pizzicato *(pizz.)*** indicates to pluck the string with your fingers. **Arco** indicates to bow the string.
Ex. 1 - Play the open A note ***pizz.*** and listen to the sound ring.
Ex. 2 - Play the open A note ***arco*** and listen for the same ring that the ***pizz.*** made.

Bow Development: Play *Beautiful Skies* with a beautiful sound or **tone** by keeping your bow parallel to the bridge and listen for the ring or **resonance** of the sound.

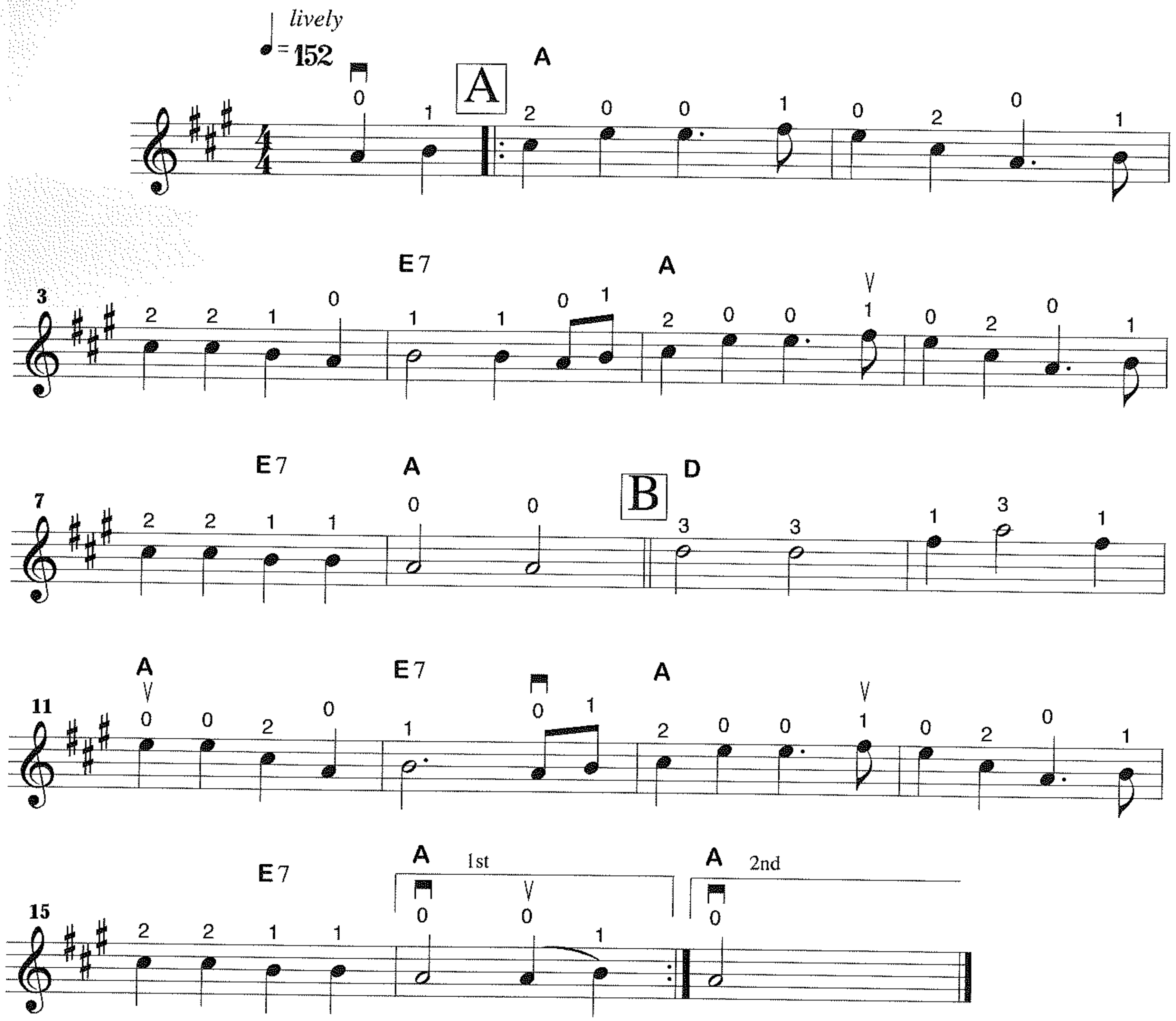


Oh! Susanna

Book I

Violin Track 6
Piano Track 29

Stephen Foster
Arr. by Mark O'Connor



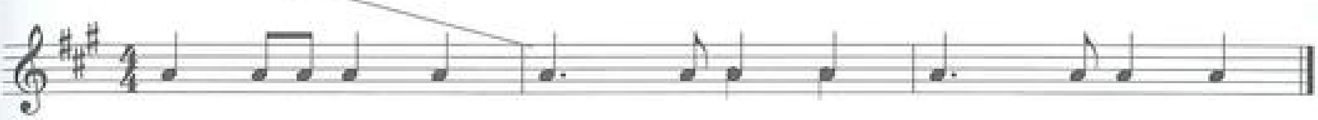
LEARNING OH! SUSANNA



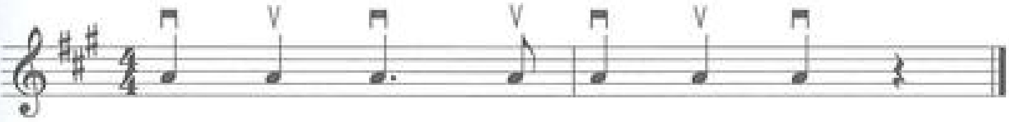
"Oh! Susanna" was written in the 1840s by America's first great songwriter, Stephen Foster. The Virginia Minstrels and The Christy's Minstrels (two of New York's first performing troupes) encouraged the young Foster to write minstrel show music. "Oh! Susanna" fits this category and eventually enjoyed great popularity. The lyrics describe a man from Alabama traveling to Louisiana to court his lover.



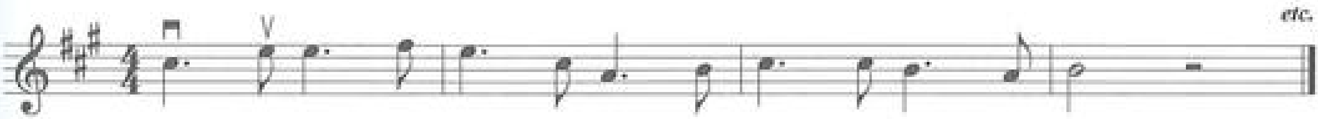
Theory: A **dotted quarter note** (♩.) receives 1+1/2 beats and can be subdivided into three eighth notes.



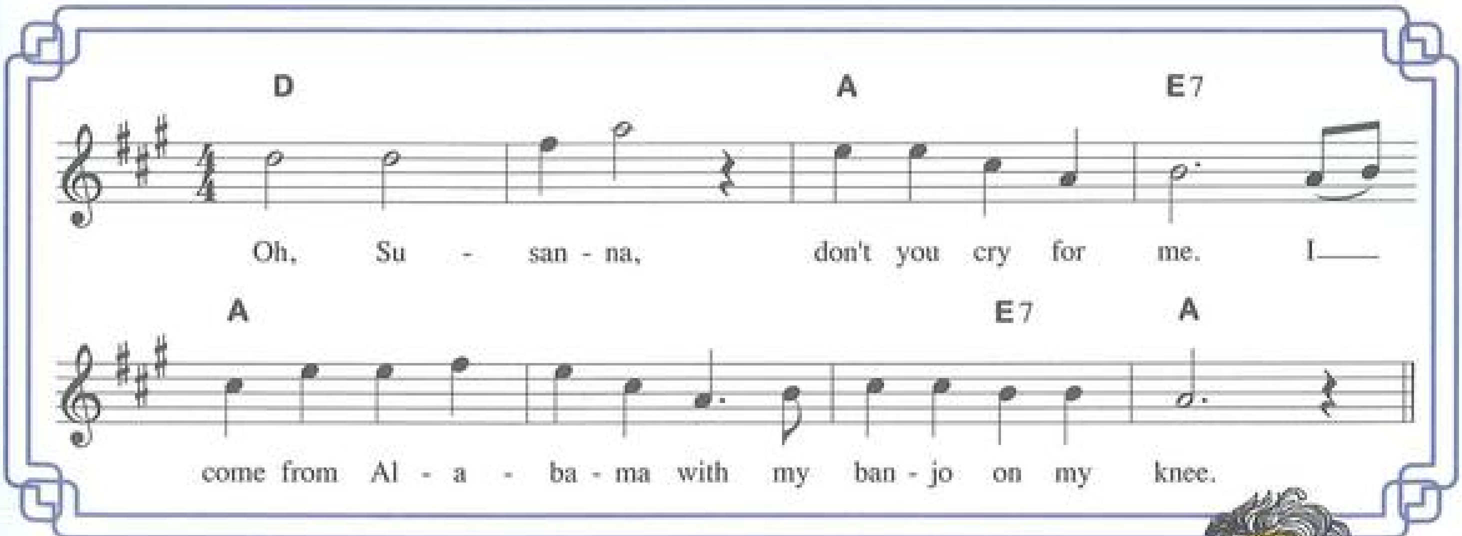
Bow Development: Slow the bow down when you play the dotted quarter note, and then speed up on the eighth note.



Ear Training/Improvisation: After you learn *Oh! Susanna*, play it with the rhythm pattern from the example below.



VARIATION WITH ORIGINAL LYRICS
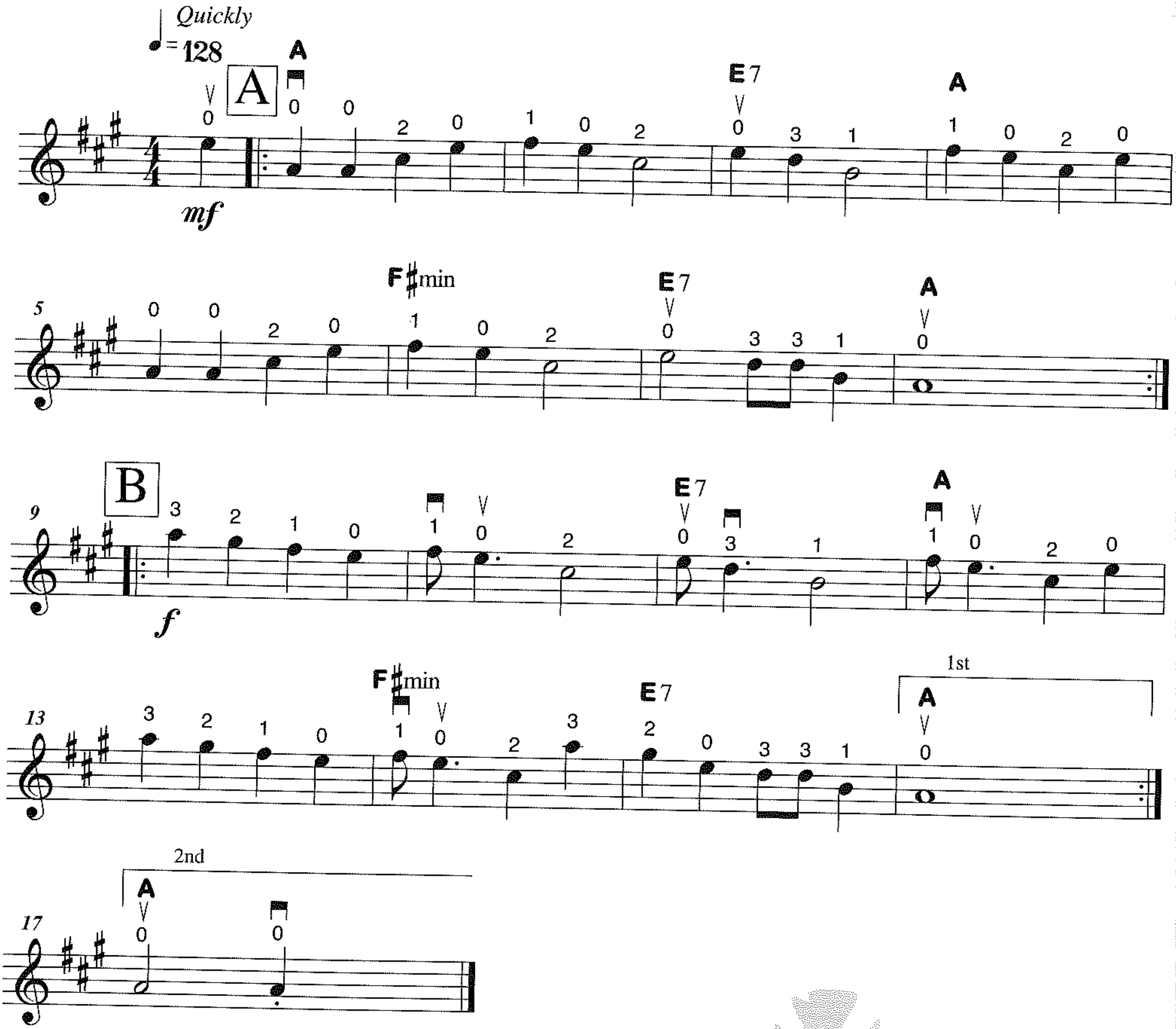




**"It rained all night the day I left, the weather it was dry.
The sun so hot I froze to death; Susanna, don't you cry.
Ha Ha! Such a fun tune to play!"**

Buffalo Gals

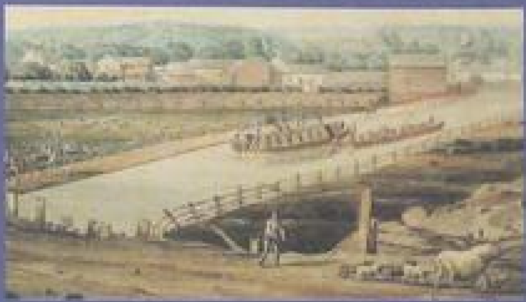
Book I

Violin-Track 7
Piano-Track 30

Traditional
Arr. by Mark O'Connor



LEARNING BUFFALO GALS

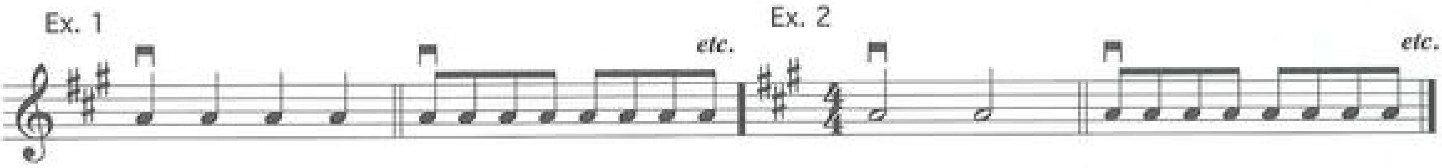


"Buffalo Gals" is a traditional American song from almost 200 years ago. In 1844, it was published by a minstrel performer named John Hodges. Originally, the song was about Buffalo, NY, during the construction of the Erie Canal ending in 1825. At that time, before steam engines were commonly used, barges carrying cargo for trade and distribution were pulled by mules through the Canal.

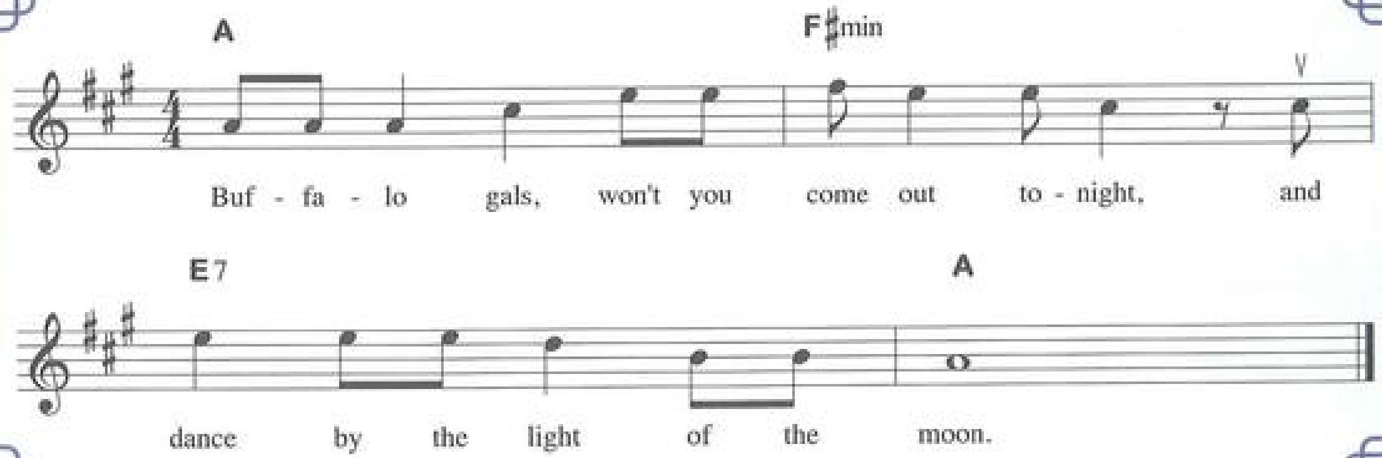


The title of the song, "Buffalo Gals," refers to the pretty girls on Canal Street in Buffalo. Because of the song's popularity, minstrel performers began to alter the lyrics to appeal to the local audiences where they were performing - "New York Gals," "Boston Gals," "Charleston Gals" and "Round Town Gals" to name a few.

Ear Training/Improvisation: Ex. 1 - Play each quarter note as two eighth notes.
Ex. 2 - Play each half note as four eighth notes. After you learn *Buffalo Gals*, play it again replacing each quarter note or half note with the correct number of eighth notes.



VARIATION WITH ORIGINAL LYRICS



"I can just see everyone dancing away as they play! Dance by the light of the moon!"
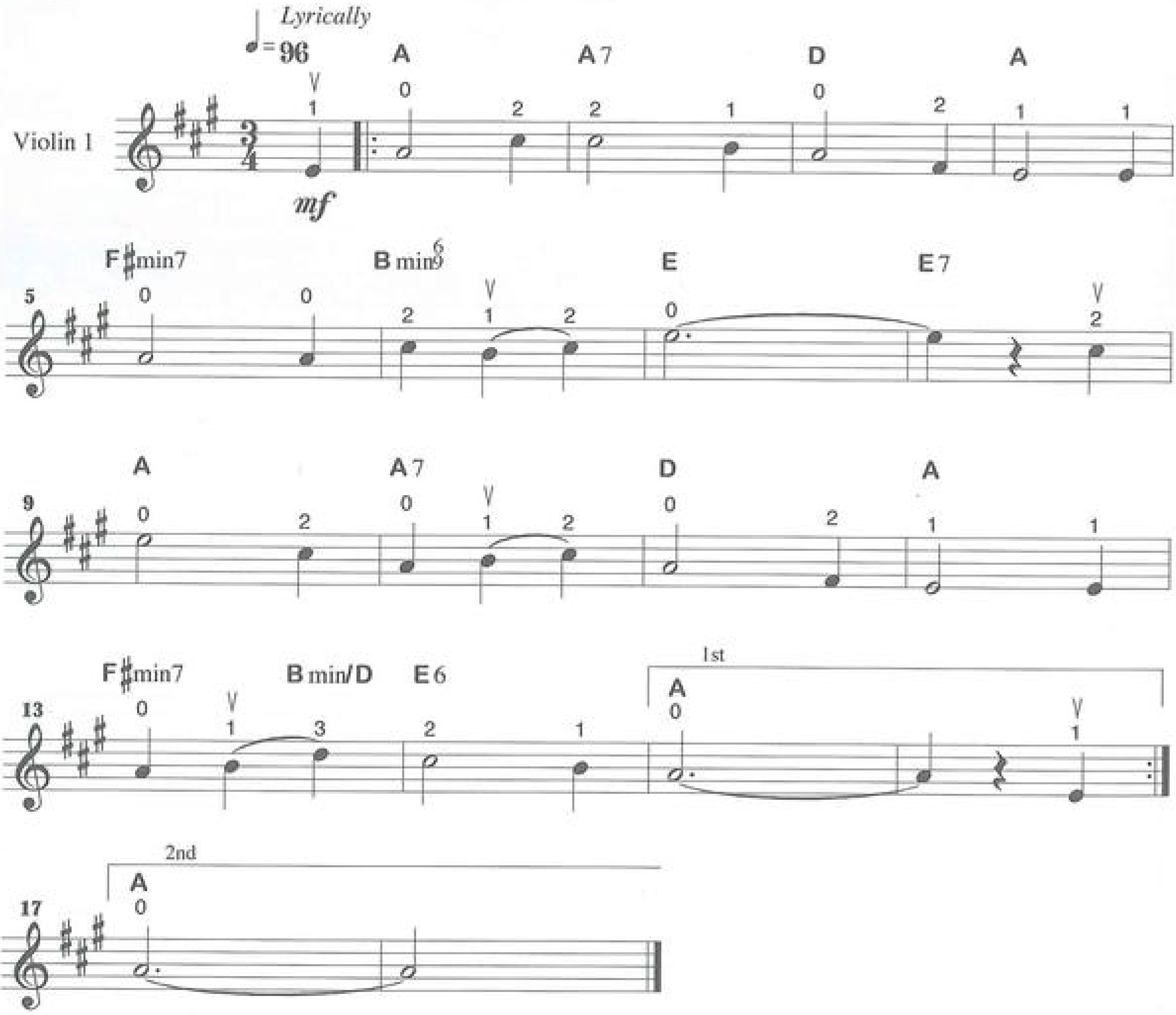


Amazing Grace

Book I

Violin-Track 8
Piano-Track 31

Traditional
Arr. by Mark O'Connor



LEARNING AMAZING GRACE



Amazing Grace is a hymn. The lyrics were written by John Newton, a slave ship captain (b. 1725, London). On one voyage, a violent storm swept a crewman overboard from the place where Newton had been standing just minutes before. As he continued steering the ship through the storm, he realized his ultimate helplessness and concluded that only the grace of God could save him and the ship.



Many years later, Newton turned to the ministry and repented his role in slavery. The lyrics of "Amazing Grace" are his reflections on a Biblical text and describe his own conversion while on his ship in 1748.

Theory: Ex. 1 - **3/4 time** ($\frac{3}{4}$) indicates that there are three beats per measure with a quarter note receiving one beat and a dotted half note (𝅗𝅥.) receiving three beats.

Ex. 2 - A **slur** is a curved line between two notes of different pitches (⁀) indicating that both notes should be played in the same bow direction without stopping.

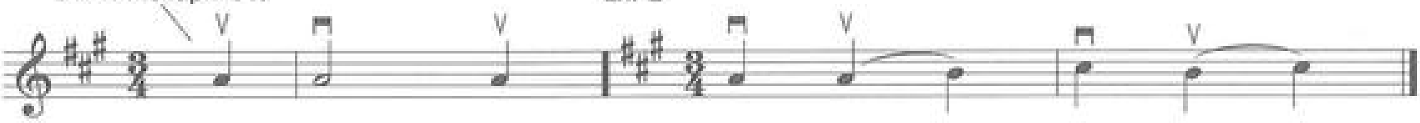
Ex. 1 Ex. 2 : Slur
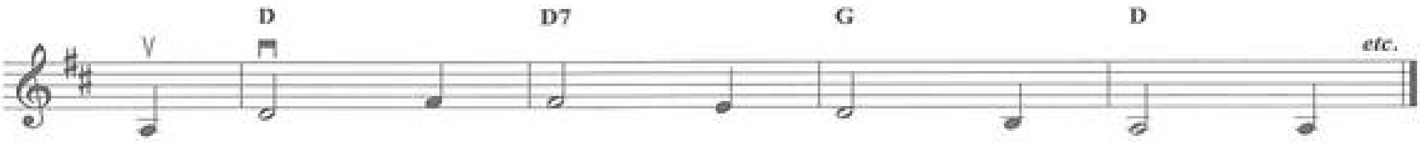


Bow Development: Ex. 1 - A **pickup note** occurs before the first complete measure.

Ex. 2 - Slurs can be played using an up bow.

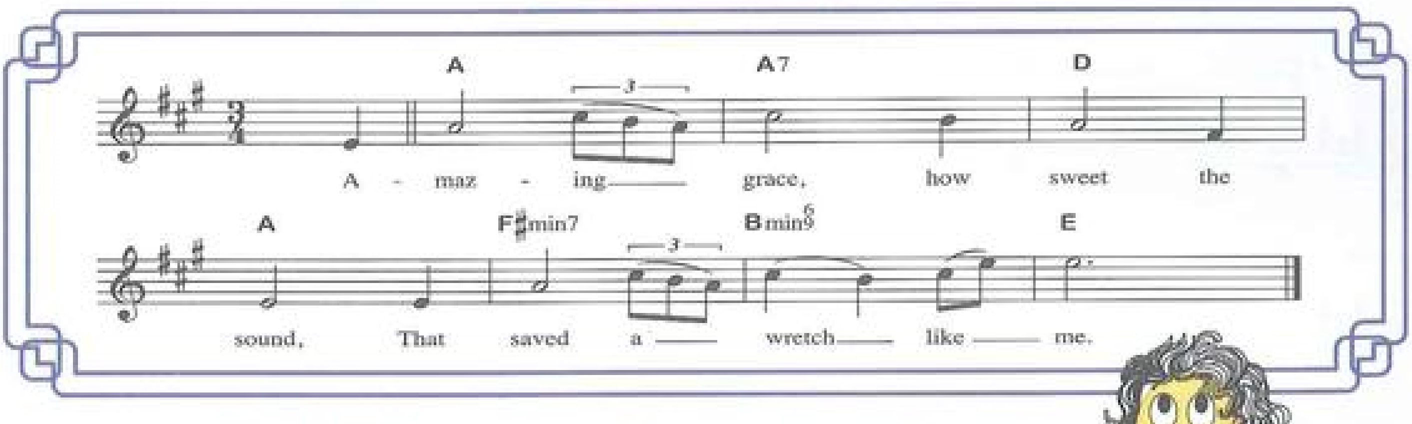
Ex. 1: Pickup Note Ex. 2



Ear Training/Improvisation: After you learn *Amazing Grace*, play it starting with the 1st finger on the G string as in the example below. Notice the new key signature. Be sure to play with beautiful tone.



VARIATION WITH ORIGINAL LYRICS
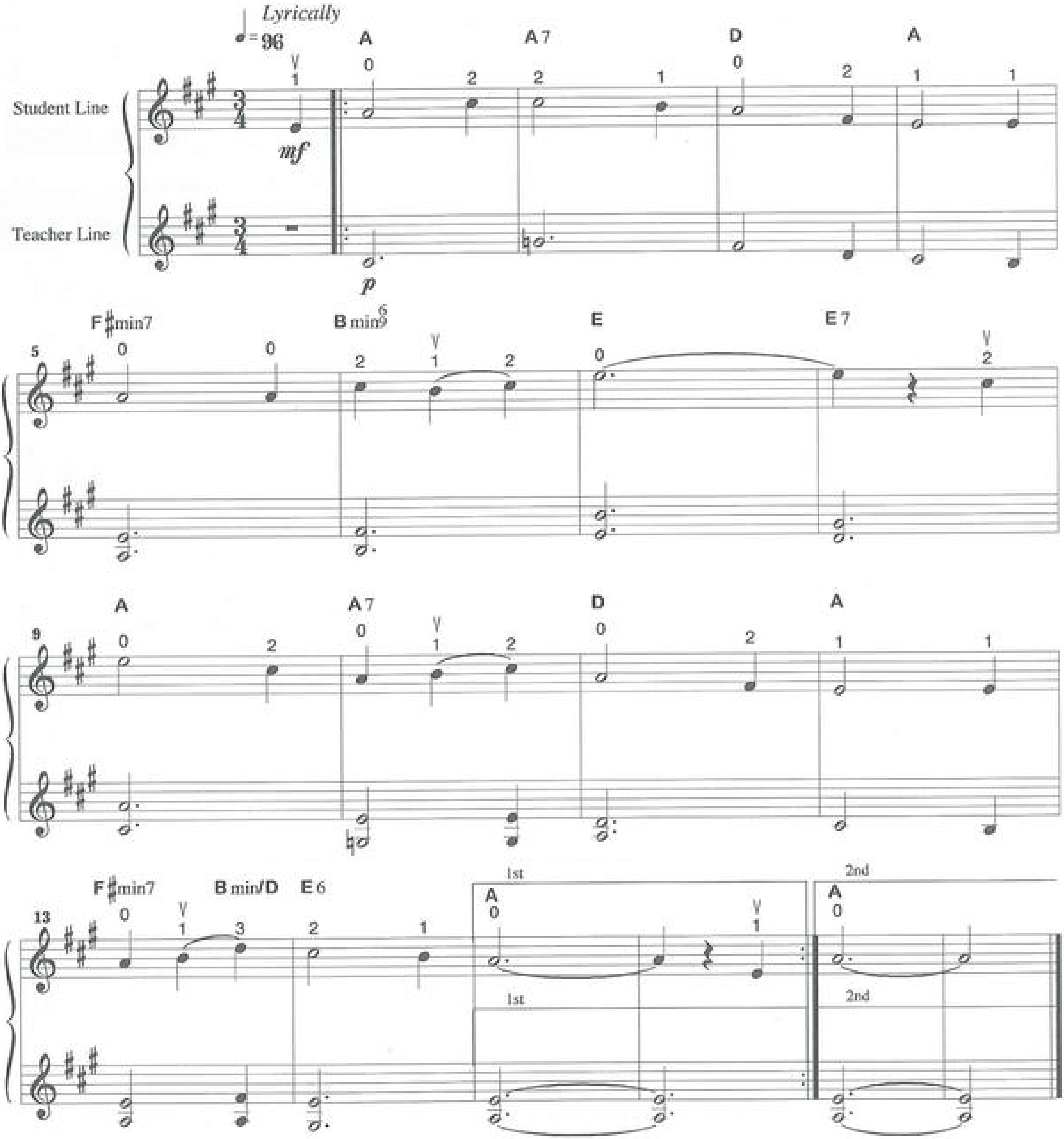




"This 500 year-old bagpipe tune and the words to Amazing Grace make me feel my emotions on the violin."

Amazing Grace

(Duet)

Book I

Traditional
Arr. by Mark O'Connor
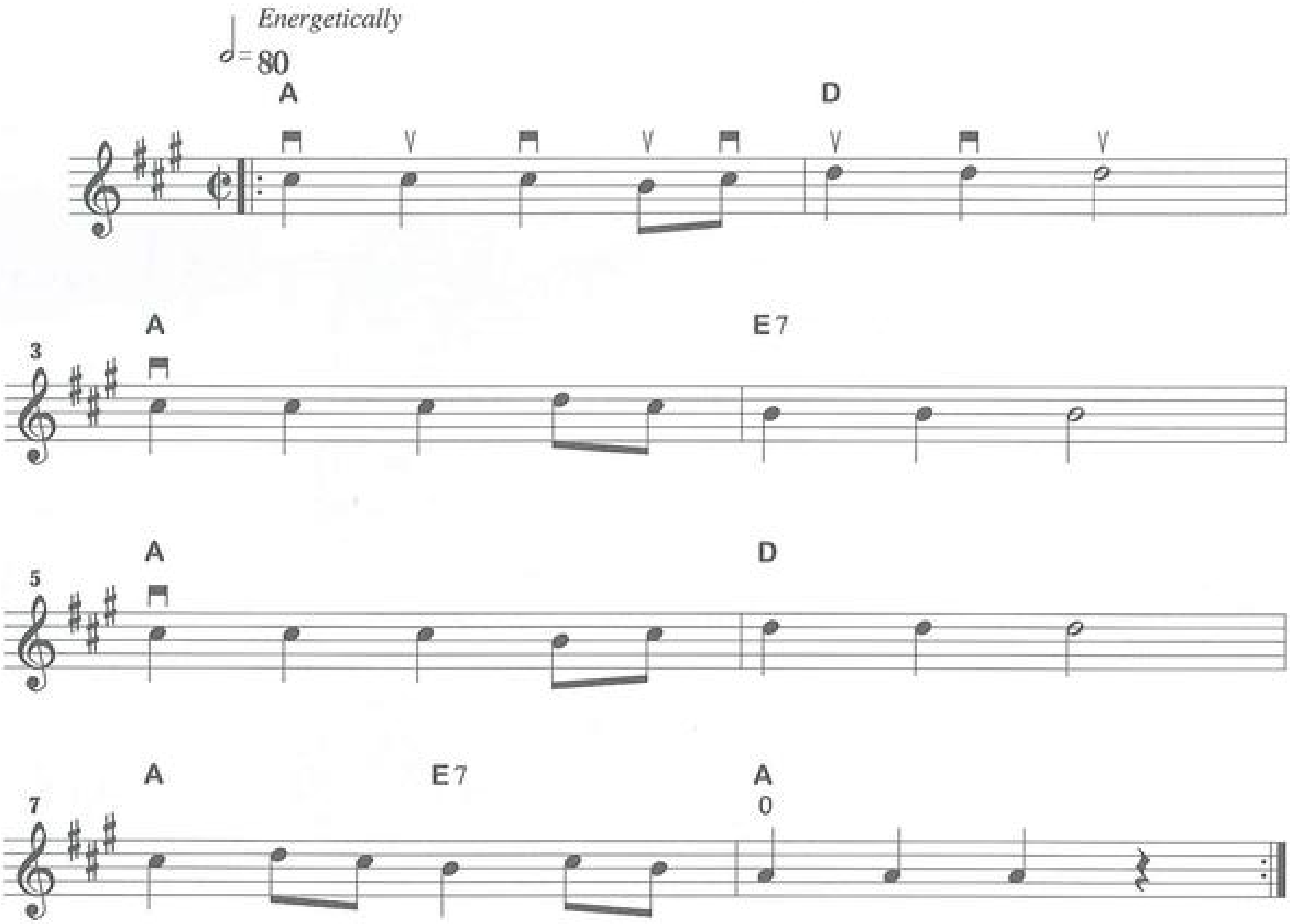




Book I

Violin-Track 9
Piano-Track 32

Boil `em Cabbage Down

(Variation 4)

American Folk Song
Arr. by Mark O'Connor
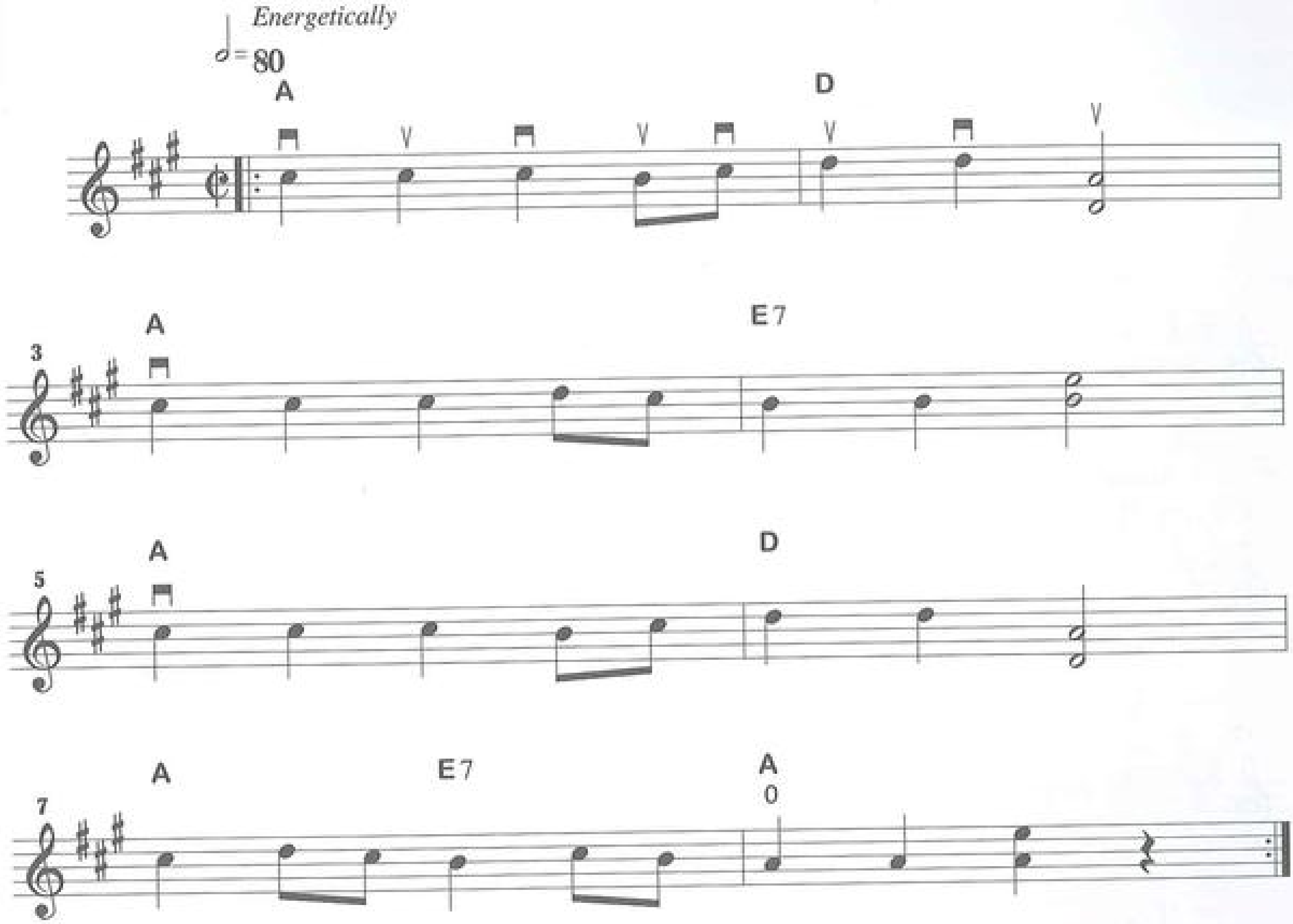


Book I

Violin-Track 10
Piano-Track 33

Boil `em Cabbage Down

(Variation 5)

American Folk Song
Arr. by Mark O'Connor

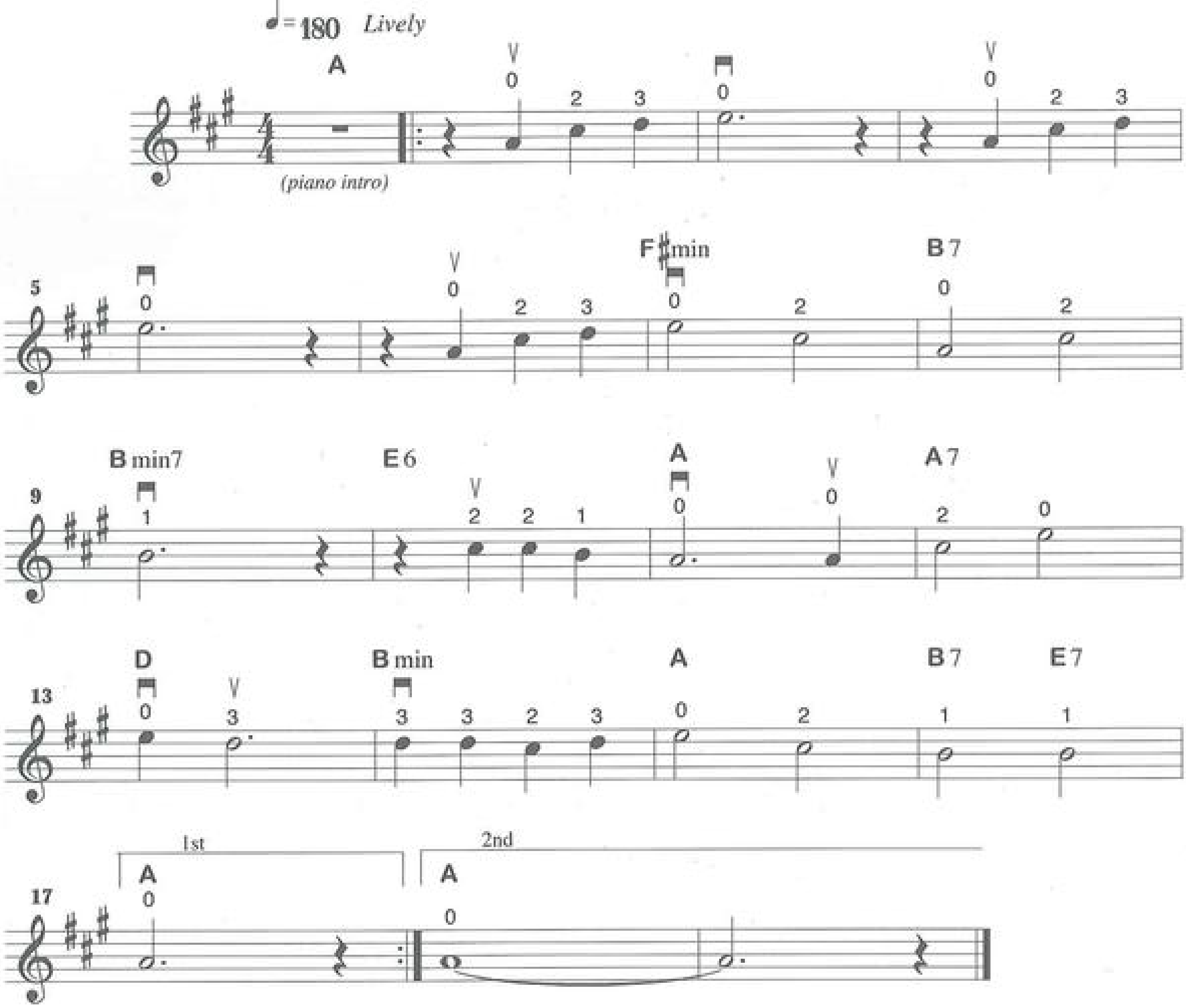


When the Saints Go Marching In

Book I

Violin-Track 11
Piano-Track 34

Traditional
Arr. by Mark O'Connor



LEARNING WHEN THE SAINTS GO MARCHING IN

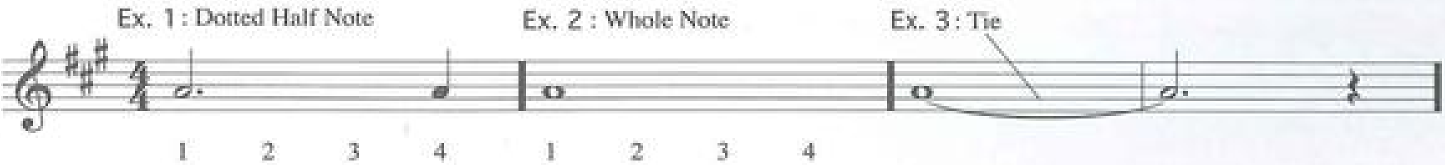
"When the Saints Go Marching In" is an African American spiritual originally played by jazz musicians and brass bands in New Orleans, Louisiana. The tradition of playing this tune at a slow hymn-like tempo while accompanying a coffin to the graveyard and then jazzing it up in a "hot" or "Dixieland" style on the way back home is still practiced today.
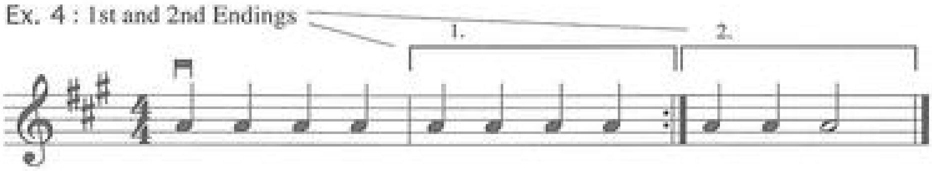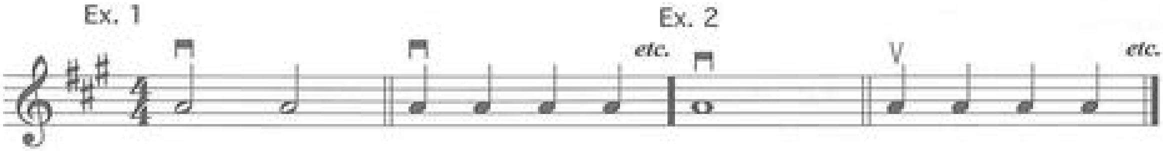




The lyrics express a wish of the deceased to join the Saints marching through the "Pearly Gates" into heaven. Many New Orleans musicians in the early 1900s made a practice of turning church songs into brass band and dance tunes. "The Saints" became well known as jazz music as well as early rock music.

Theory: Ex. 1 - A **dotted half note** (𝅗𝅥.) is held for three beats.
Ex. 2 - A **whole note** (𝅝) lasts four beats or four quarter notes.
Ex. 3 - A **tie** is a curved line that connects two or more notes of the same pitch.
Ex. 4 - 1st and 2nd endings tell you to play the 1st ending and then repeat. The second time through, skip the 1st ending and play the 2nd ending.

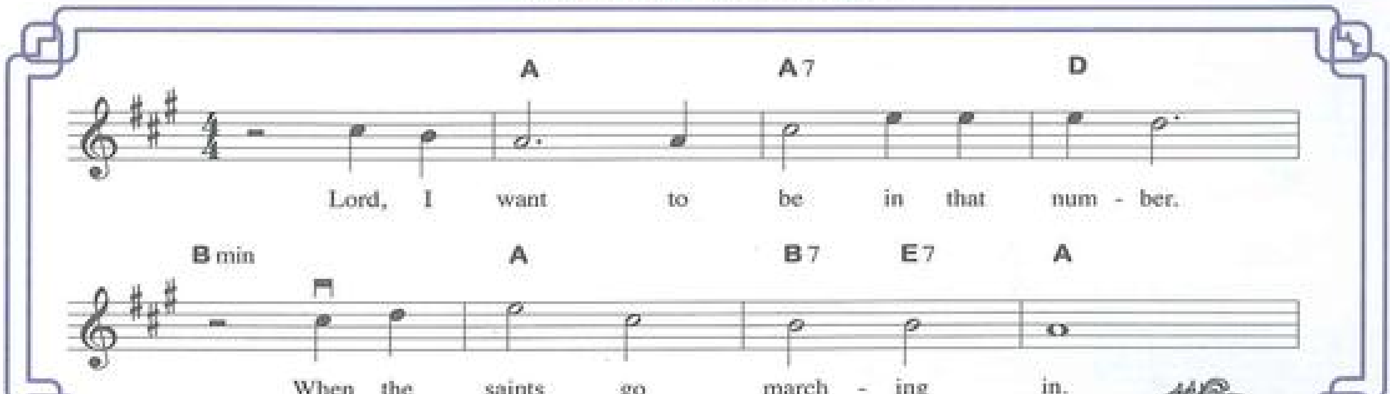




Ear Training/Improvisation: After you learn *When the Saints Go Marching In*, play it again but replace each half note and whole note with quarter notes.



VARIATION WITH ORIGINAL LYRICS
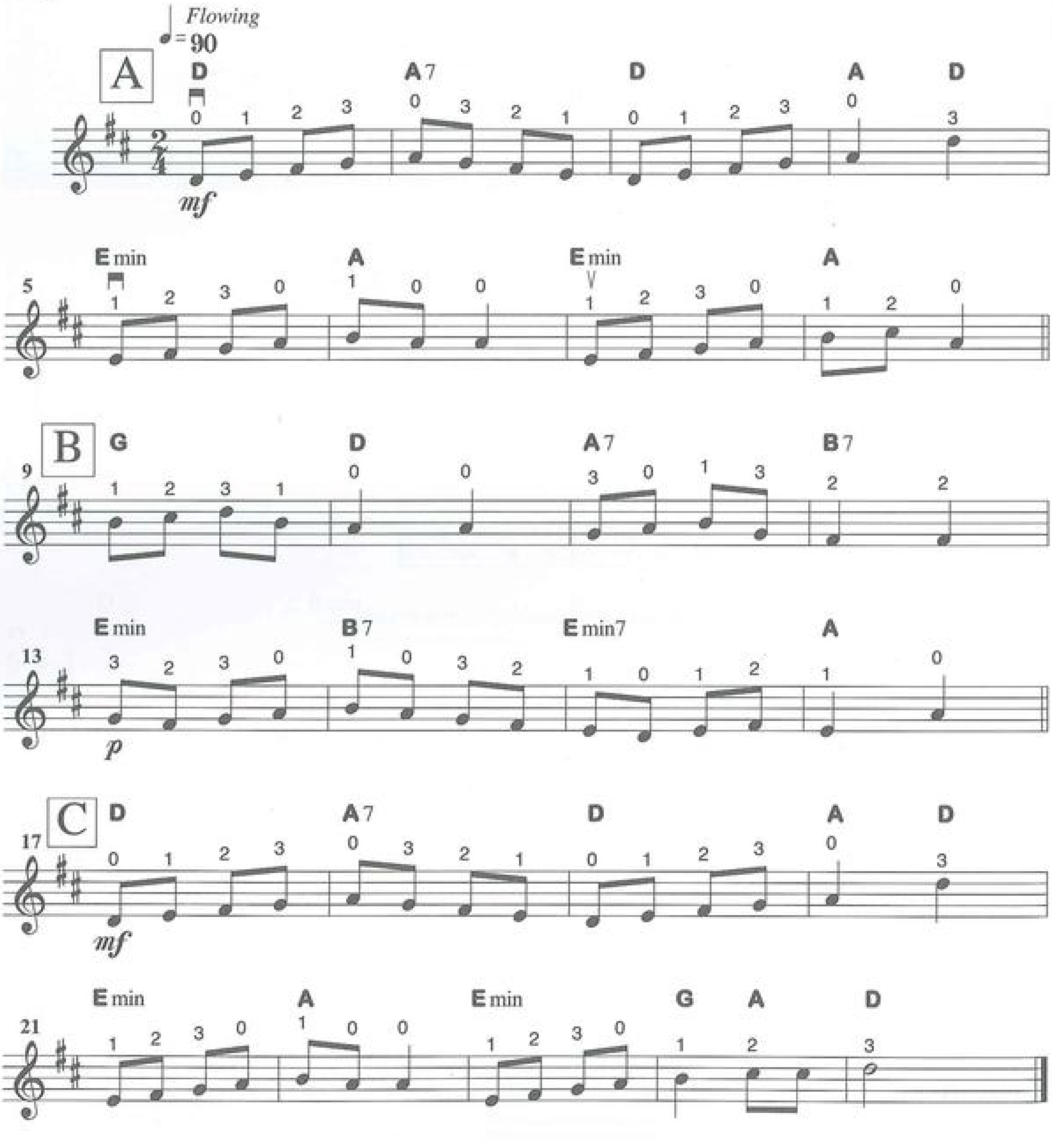




"When I play this tune, I can just imagine the Saints going through those Pearly Gates: I want to be in that number!"

Westward Journey

Book I

Mark O'Connor

Violin-Track 12
Piano-Track 35





My cousin Dawn and I hopped on top of the old wagon at my uncle's ranch in Montana. Our horse was right beside us. It was amazing to think about the times long ago when the horse and wagon were the only ways to reach the state of Montana.

I composed "Westward Journey" inspired by the many people who hoped for a better life in the West.

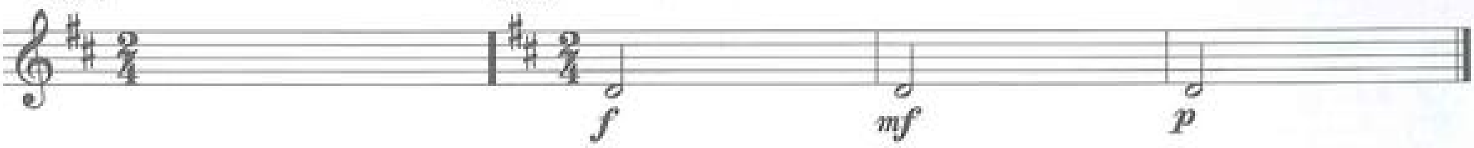
When I am in the western states, I always find lots of cows, or perhaps they find me! The cows seemed to like it when I played violin for them!
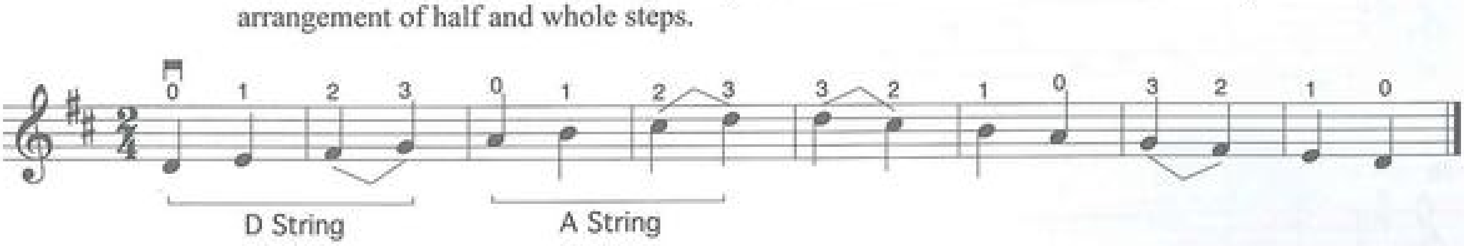


Key of "D" Major

Theory: Ex. 1 - The **key of D major** has two sharps, which means that the notes C and F are played as C# and F#.
Ex. 2 - **Dynamic Markings** are symbols that indicate different levels of volume. ***Forte*** (***f***) means to play loud or strongly. ***Mezzo forte*** (***mf***) means to play medium loud. ***Piano*** (***p***) means to play soft or gently.

Ex. 1 Ex. 2



Ear Training/Improvisation: *Westward Journey* is in D major. Play the D major scale. Even though each major scale begins on a different note, the order of half and whole steps is the same. Play a major scale beginning on the A note. The mood of a **major** key is often cheerful. This sound is created by the arrangement of half and whole steps.
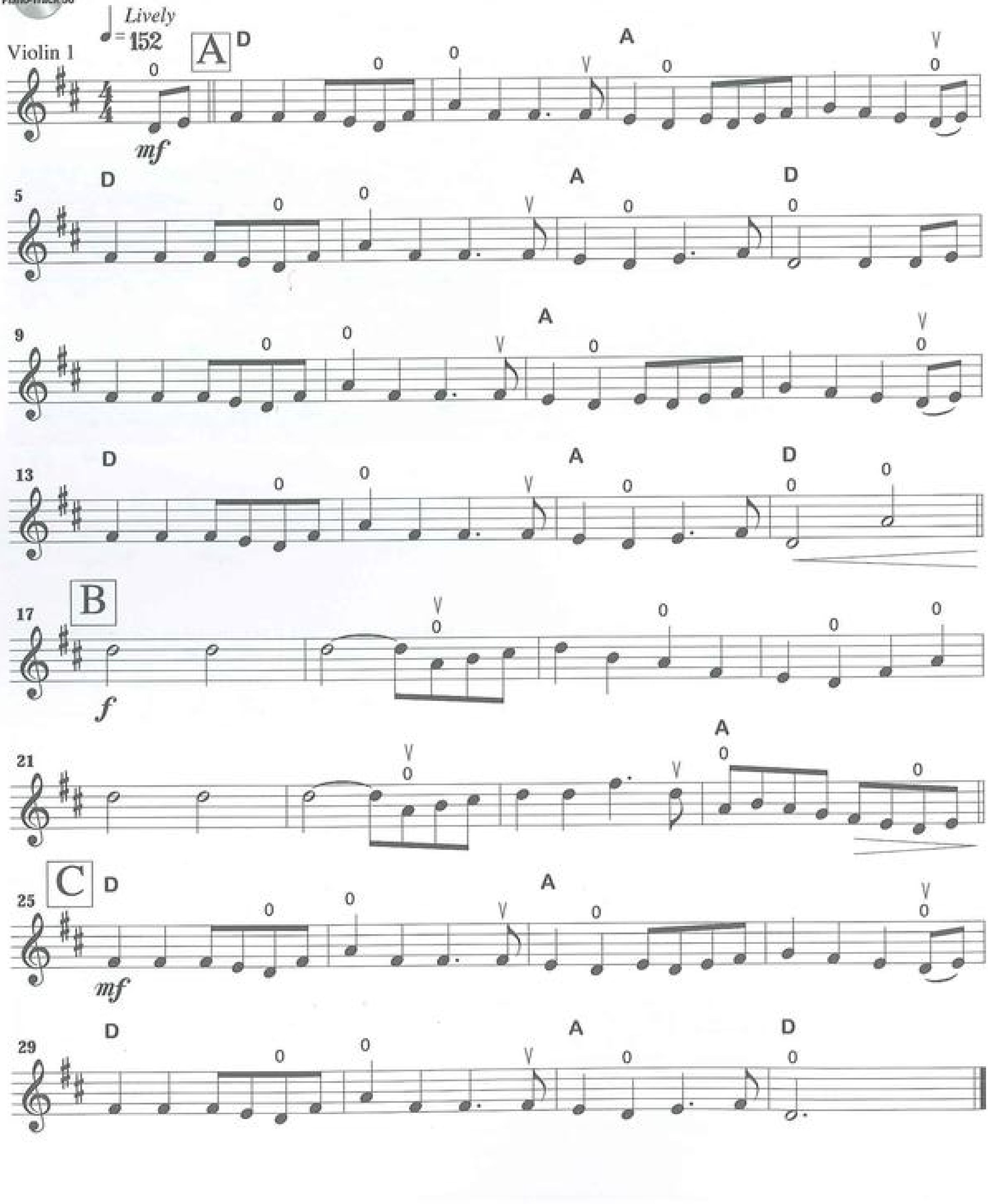


Bonaparte's Retreat

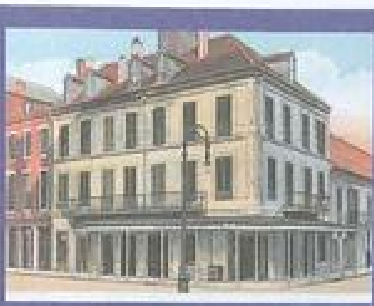
Book I

Violin-Track 13
Piano-Track 36

Traditional
Arr. by Mark O'Connor



LEARNING BONAPARTE'S RETREAT

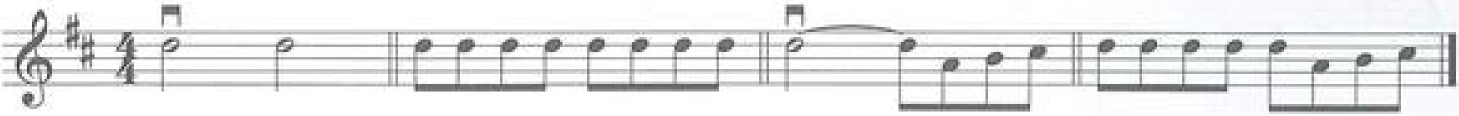


The melody of "Bonaparte's Retreat" was originally a Scotch/Irish tune played on bagpipes. In 1815, the tune was named for the military defeat of the French Emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte. It is commonly thought that this battle, fought at Waterloo, Belgium, was the turning point for Bonaparte and prevented him from achieving his ambition of conquering the world.

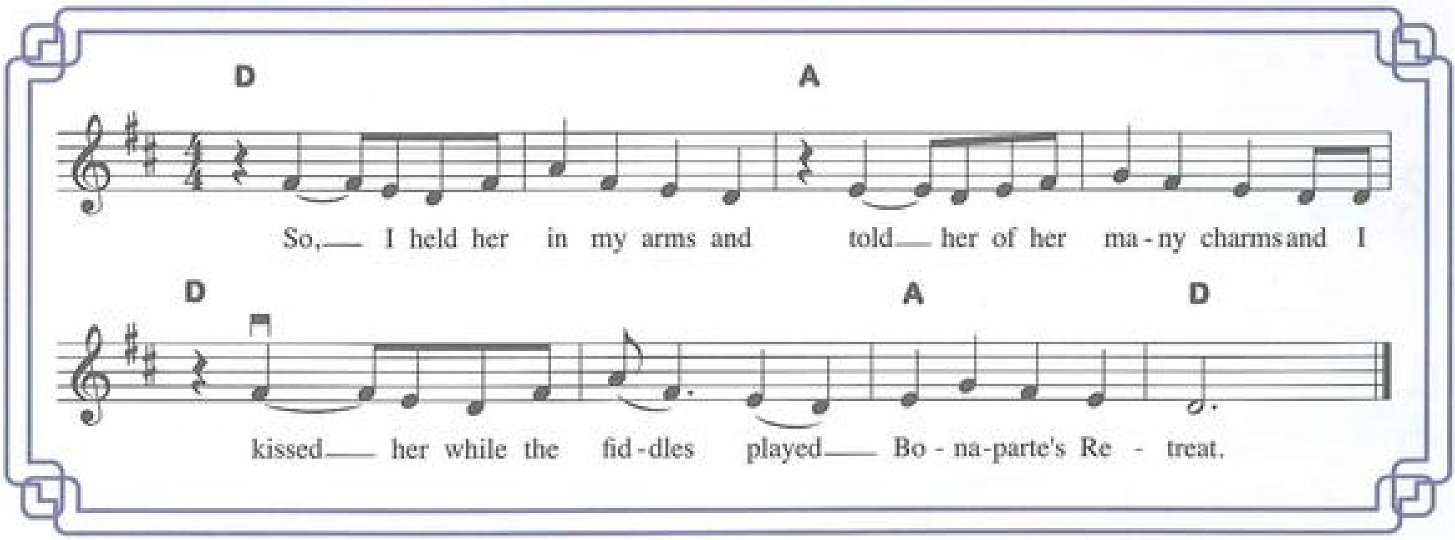


When Thomas Jefferson was president of the United States, Bonaparte acquired the Territory of Louisiana and owned a home in New Orleans. It is assumed that he had his sights set on acquiring much more of the American West to add to his Empire. The defeat of Bonaparte's army at Waterloo was cause for celebration around the world, and "Bonaparte's Retreat" has been a favorite tune for Americans to play ever since. In 1946, country music stars Pee Wee King and Redd Stewart wrote a hit song using the melody of this fiddle tune. The song was recorded by Kay Star.

Ear Training/Improvisation: After you learn *Bonaparte's Retreat*, play it again changing each half note to four eighth notes.



VARIATION WITH ORIGINAL LYRICS



"I kissed her while the fiddles played Bonaparte's Retreat? Woooooeeeeee! I want to play this tune over and over again!"
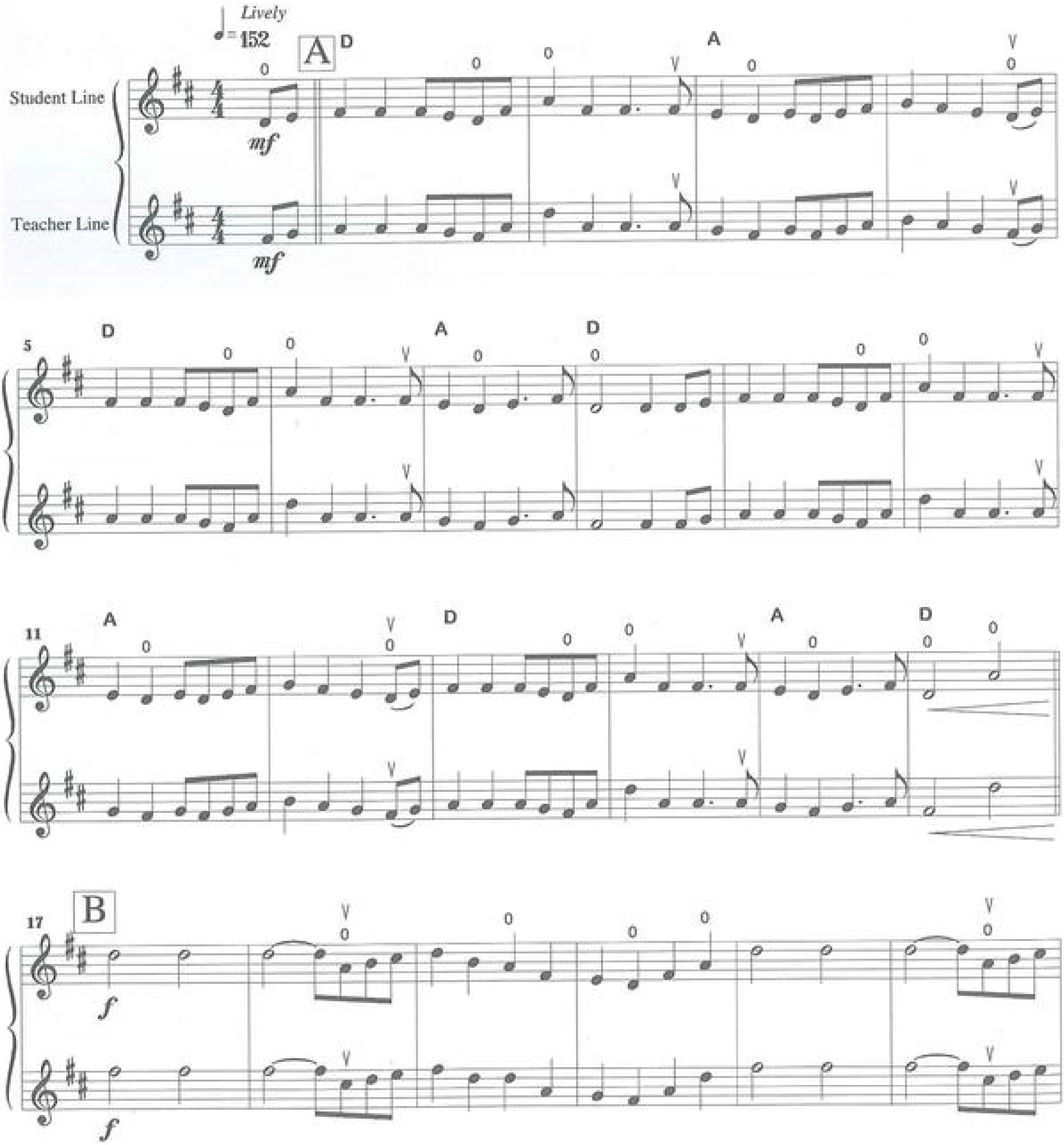


Bonaparte's Retreat

(Duet)

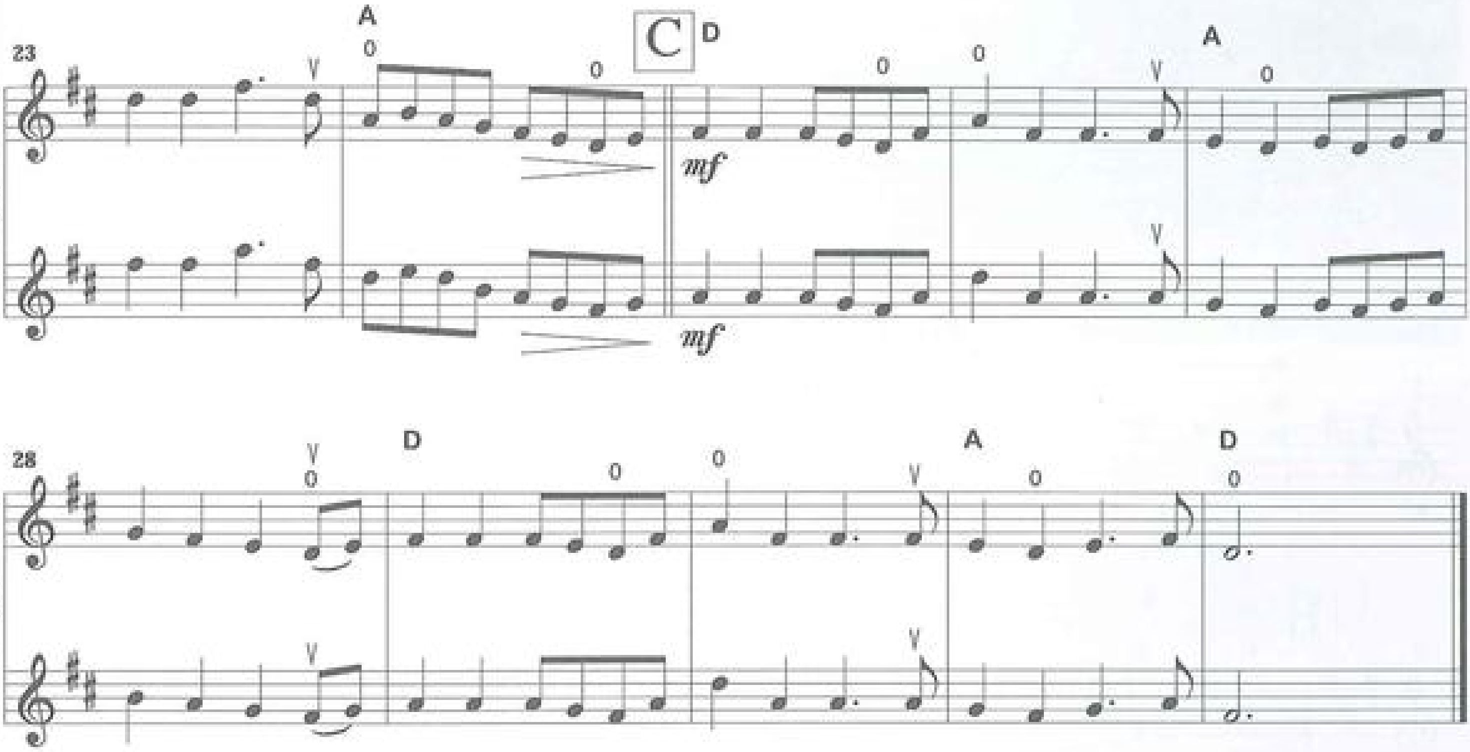
Book I

Traditional
Arr. by Mark O'Connor



Bonaparte's Retreat *continued*

(Duet)

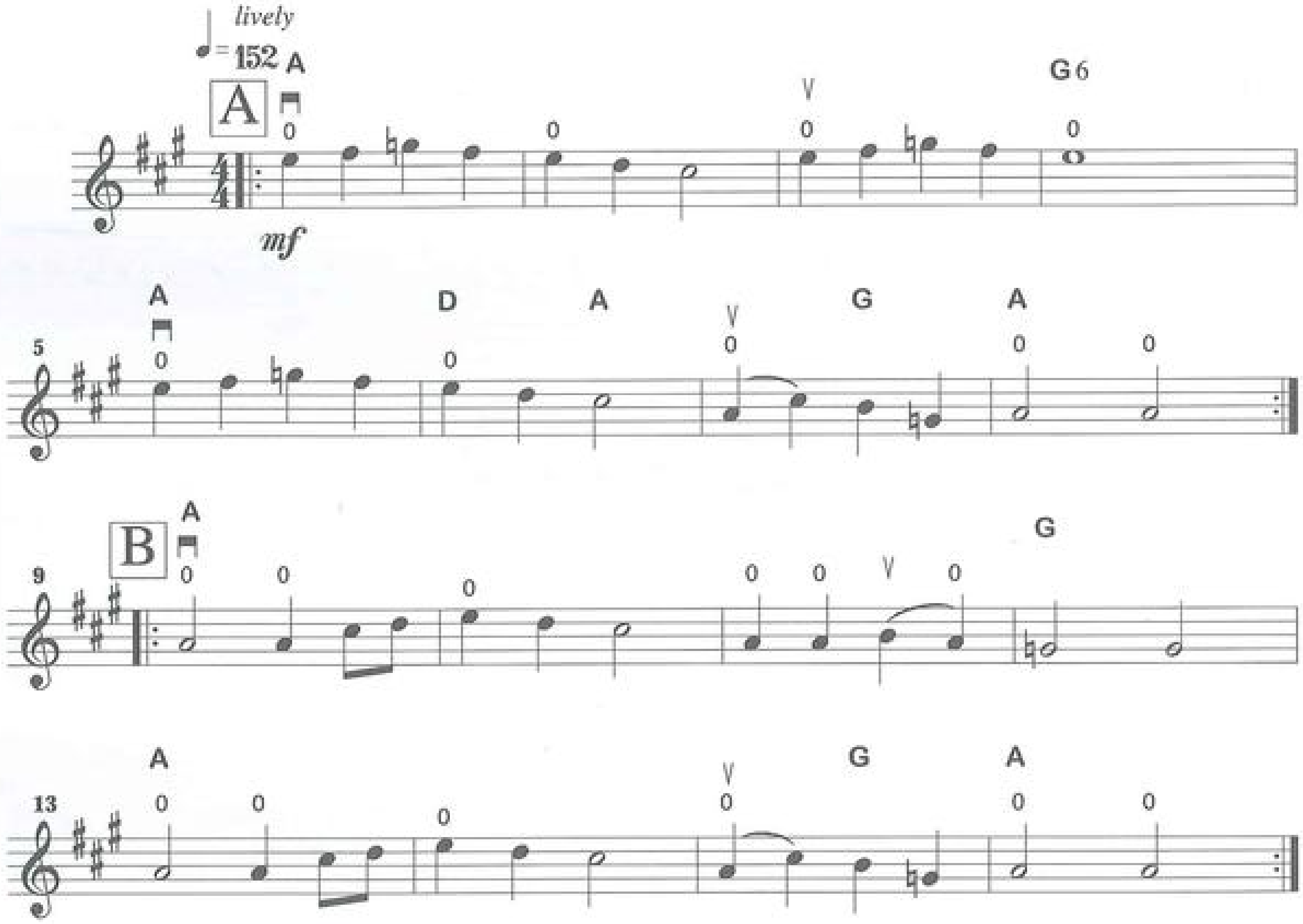


Old Joe Clark

Book I

Violin-Track 14
Piano-Track 37

Traditional
Arr. by Mark O'Connor



LEARNING OLD JOE CLARK

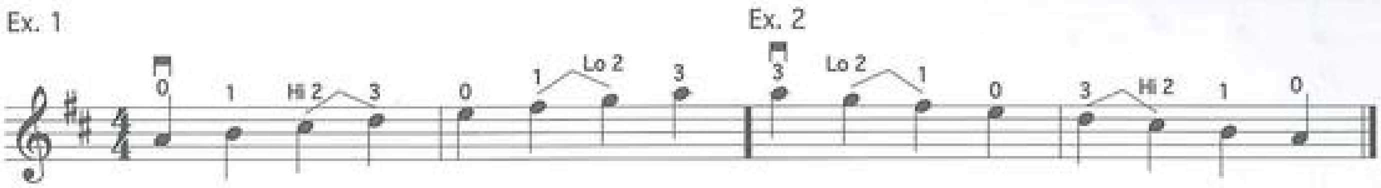




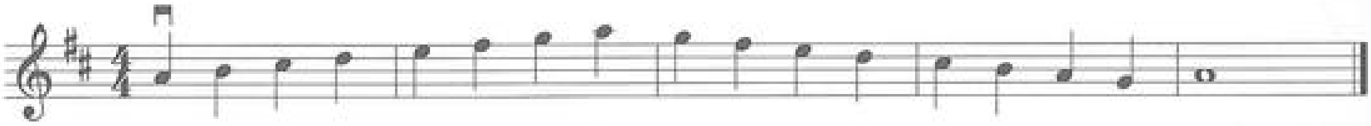
Joe Clark lived as a shiftless mountaineer in Virginia in the 1800s. He had many enemies and is reported to have met his end at the hand of one of them in 1885. Although the identity of the writer of this old American song is technically unknown, legend has it that a rejected beau of Joe Clark's daughter wrote it after Clark's death.

The lyrics are silly and poke fun at Old Joe. They also suggest that the writer did have some personal knowledge of, and perhaps some interest in, the Clark family home: "Eighteen miles of mountain road, and fifteen miles of sand. If I ever travel this road again, I'll be a married man."

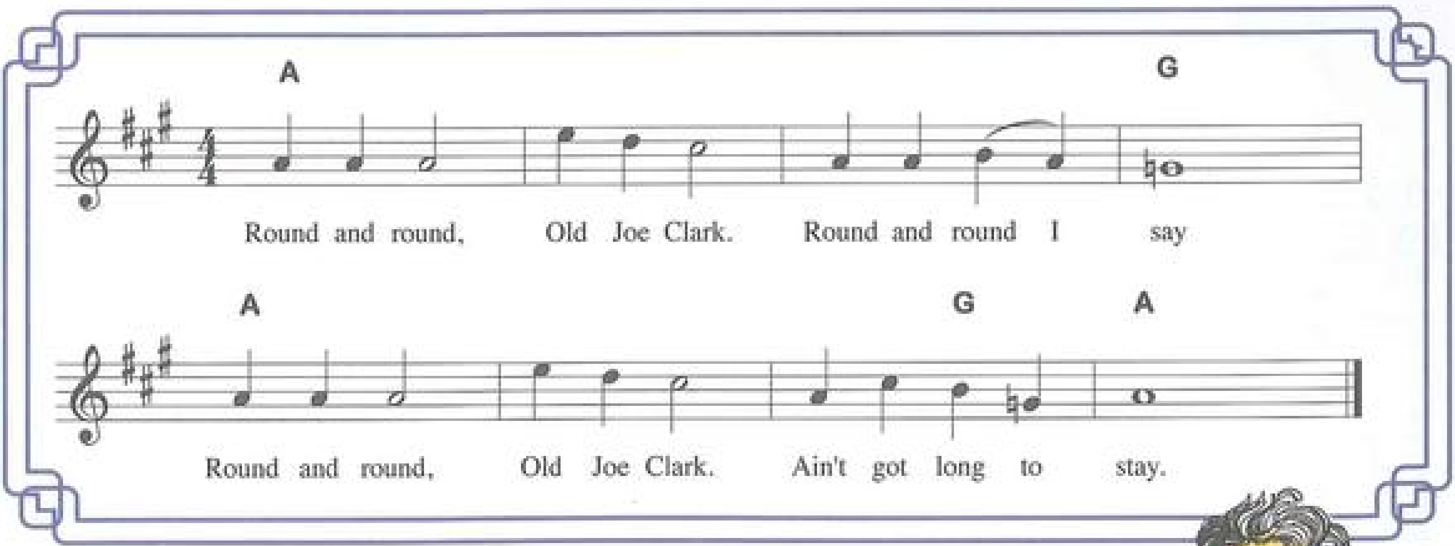
Theory: Ex. 1 - As you play Ex. 1 and Ex. 2, watch for the **Lo 2s** - 2nd finger playing natural notes and **Hi 2s** - 2nd finger playing sharped notes.



Ear Training/Improvisation: Make up your own melody from this **modal scale** used in *Old Joe Clark.*



VARIATION WITH ORIGINAL LYRICS



"Old Joe Clark, he had a dog, like none you've ever seen. With floppy ears and curly tail and six feet in between. That's one long dog!"
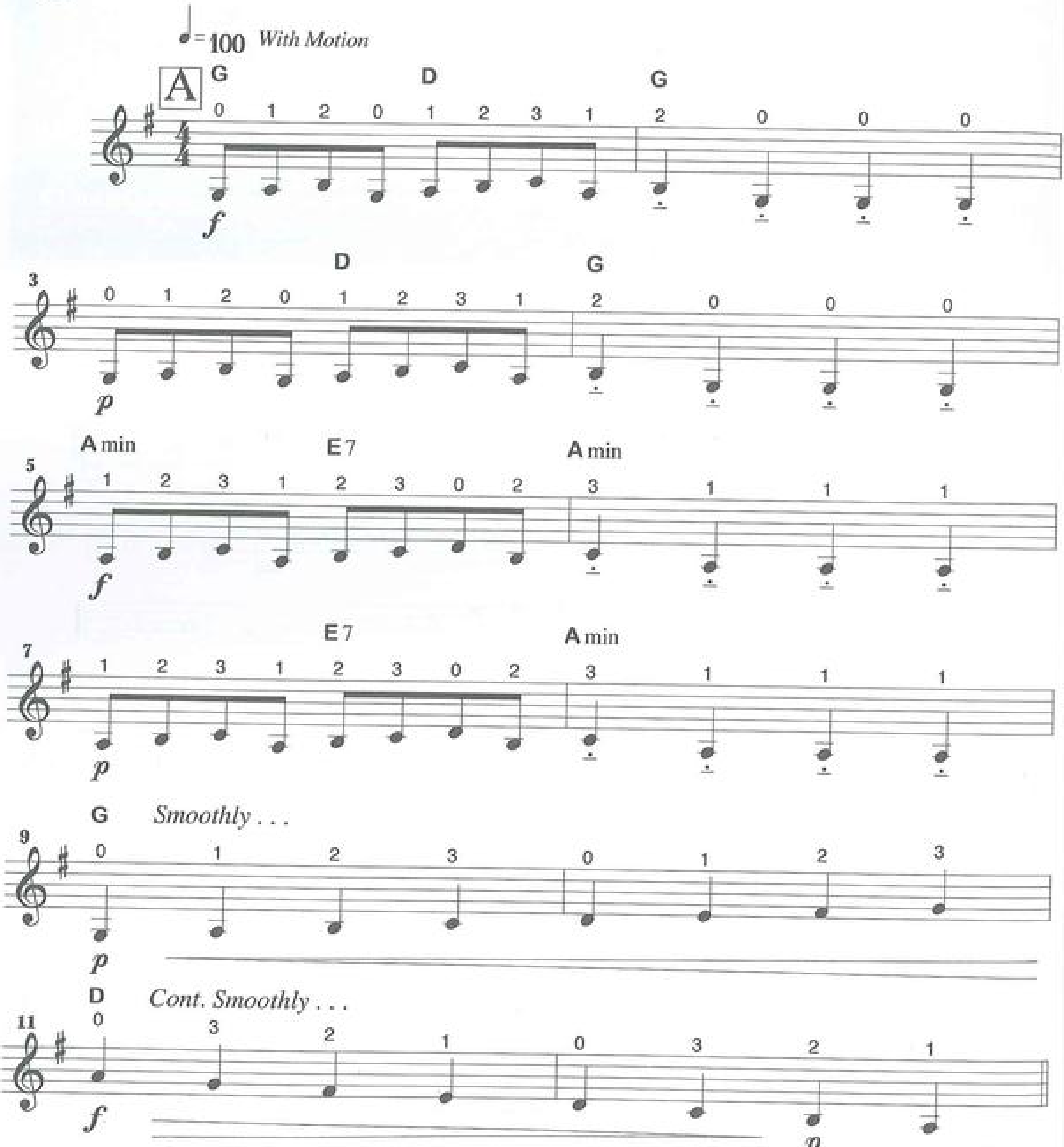


Climbing the Mountain

Book I
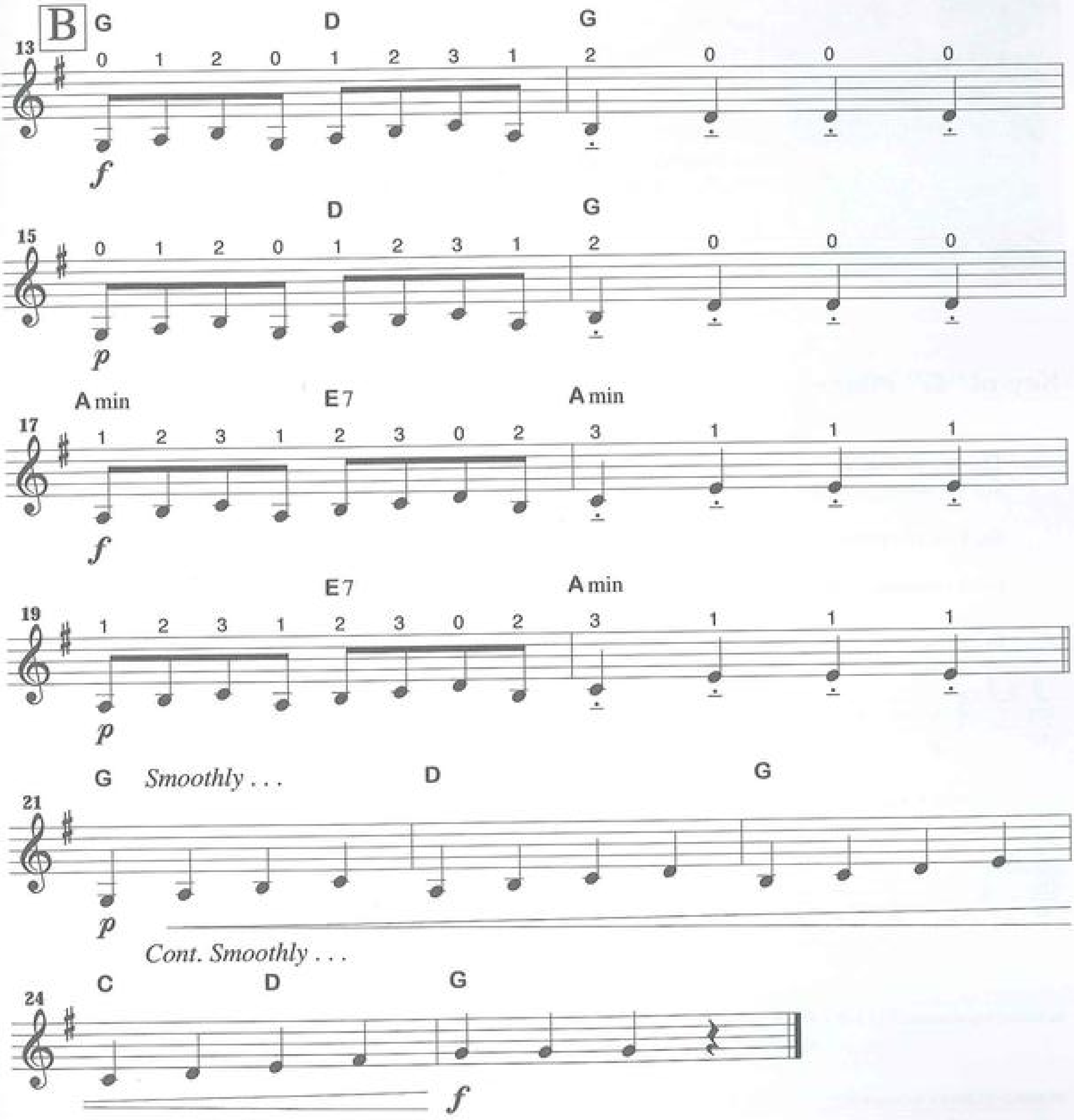
Violin-Track 15
Piano-Track 38

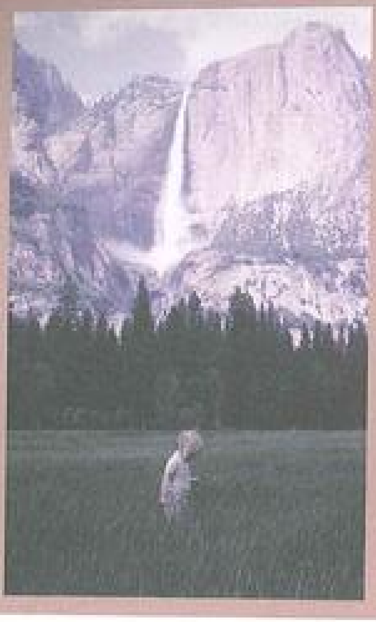
Mark O'Connor



Cont...

Climbing the Mountain *continued*

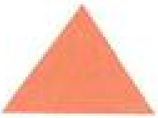




I often dream of going to the top of a mountain. Every time I see the mountains, I want to climb them! I like walking through the meadow with the mountain range hovering over me. Then I gradually head up into the foothills seeing the mountain ahead. As the slopes become steeper, I take long, smooth steps. I think about flying up the mountain with the biggest, most graceful steps I can take. I usually don't make it all the way to the top because most of the mountains are so big. When I composed "Climbing the Mountain" I have you begin at the very bottom on the G string. As you play this tune, you can make it all the way to the top!



Key of "G" Major



Theory: The key of **G major** has one sharp which means that the note F is played as F#.

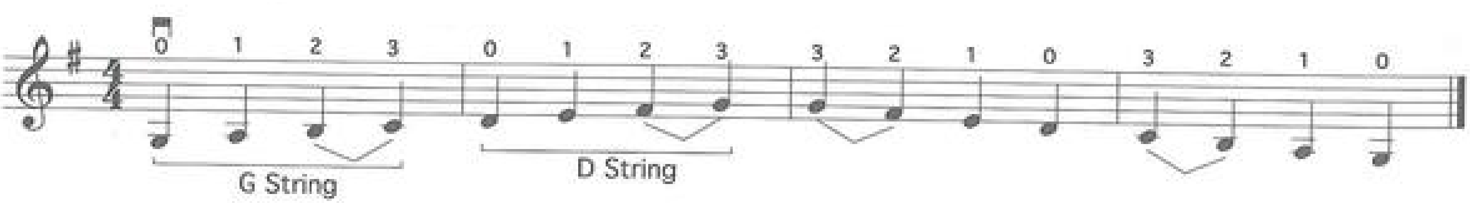
Ex. 1 - **Crescendo** ( ), or gradually get louder.

Ex. 2 - **Decrescendo** ( ), or gradually get softer.

Ex. 1 Ex. 2

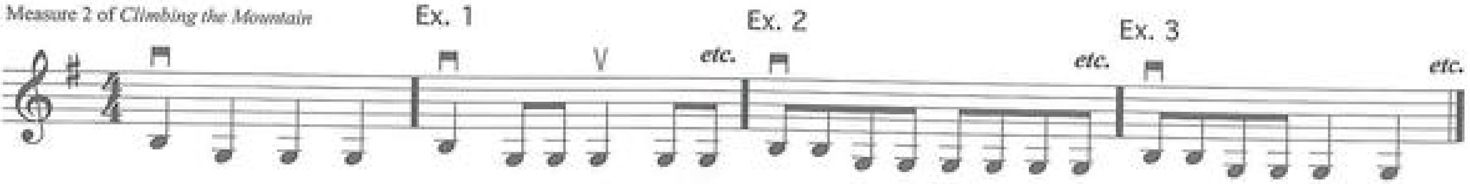


Play the **G major scale**.



Ear Training/Improvisation: Ex. 1-3 - After you learn *Climbing the Mountain*, play it again and change the rhythm of the quarter notes by adding some paired eighth notes.

Measure 2 of *Climbing the Mountain* Ex. 1 Ex. 2 Ex. 3
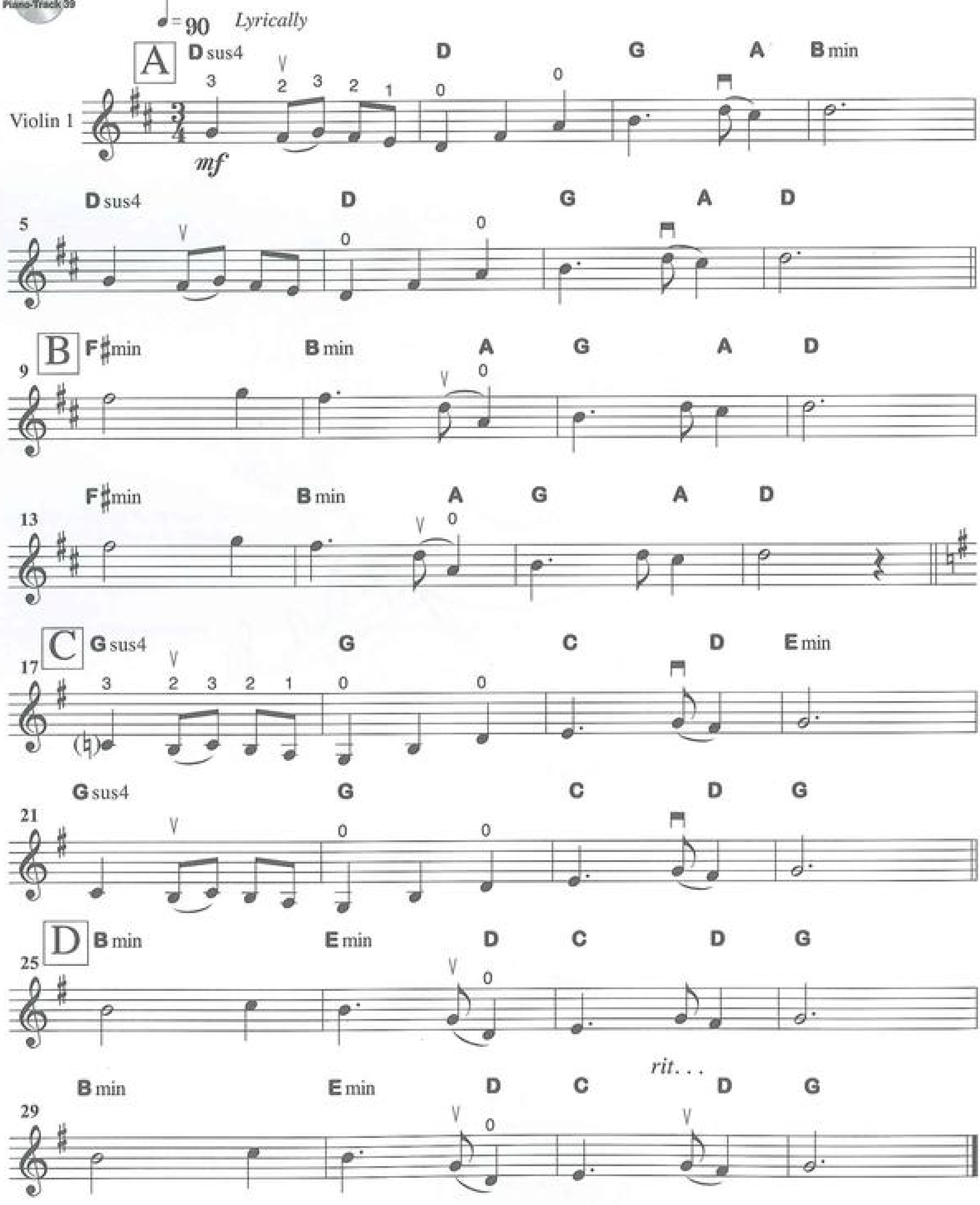




Appalachia Waltz

Book I

Mark O'Connor

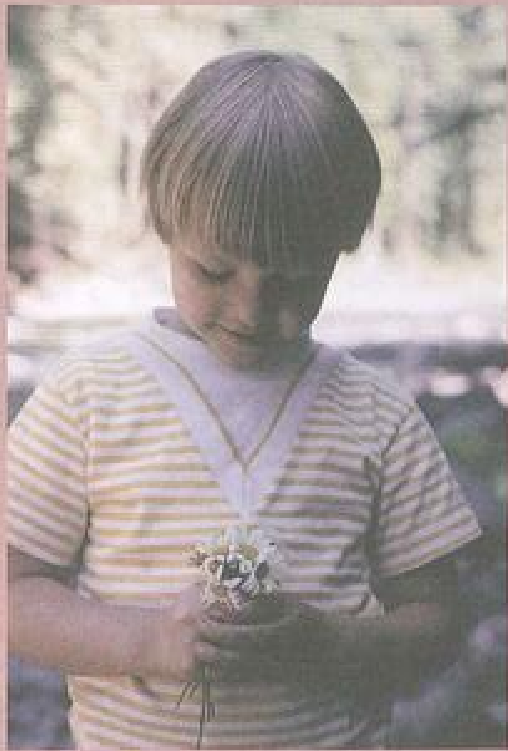
Violin-Track 16
Piano-Track 39



LEARNING APPALACHIA WALTZ

I like the leaves when they change color in Autumn. All through the Appalachian mountains the colors are so beautiful. The red, orange and yellow leaves are everywhere around you. I wrote "Appalachia Waltz" about this nice place.
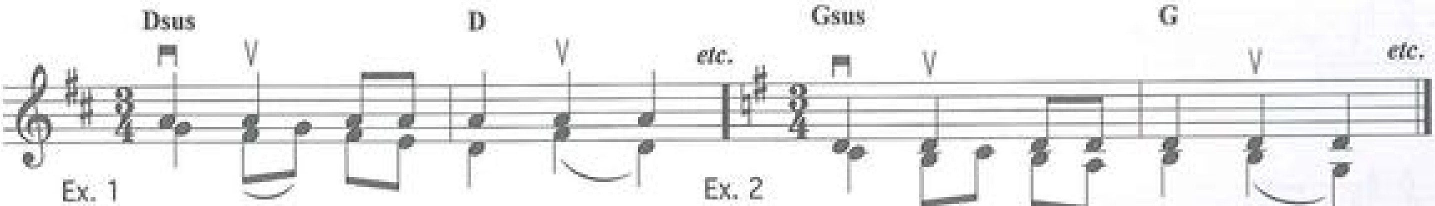




When I pick wild flowers, I think about remembering home. I pick one for each member of my family and each of my best friends – and my pets too. I love playing the violin because the music helps me remember my favorite things.

Theory: *Appalachia Waltz* is in two keys - D major and G major. The music slows down at the very end and so it is marked: ***rit.*** It is an abbreviation of the word ***ritardando*** meaning to gradually slow down.

Ear Training/Improvisation: Ex. 1 - Play the melody of *Appalachia Waltz* on the D string with your open A as a **double-stop**.
Ex. 2 - Play the melody of *Appalachia Waltz* on the G string with your open D as a **double-stop**.
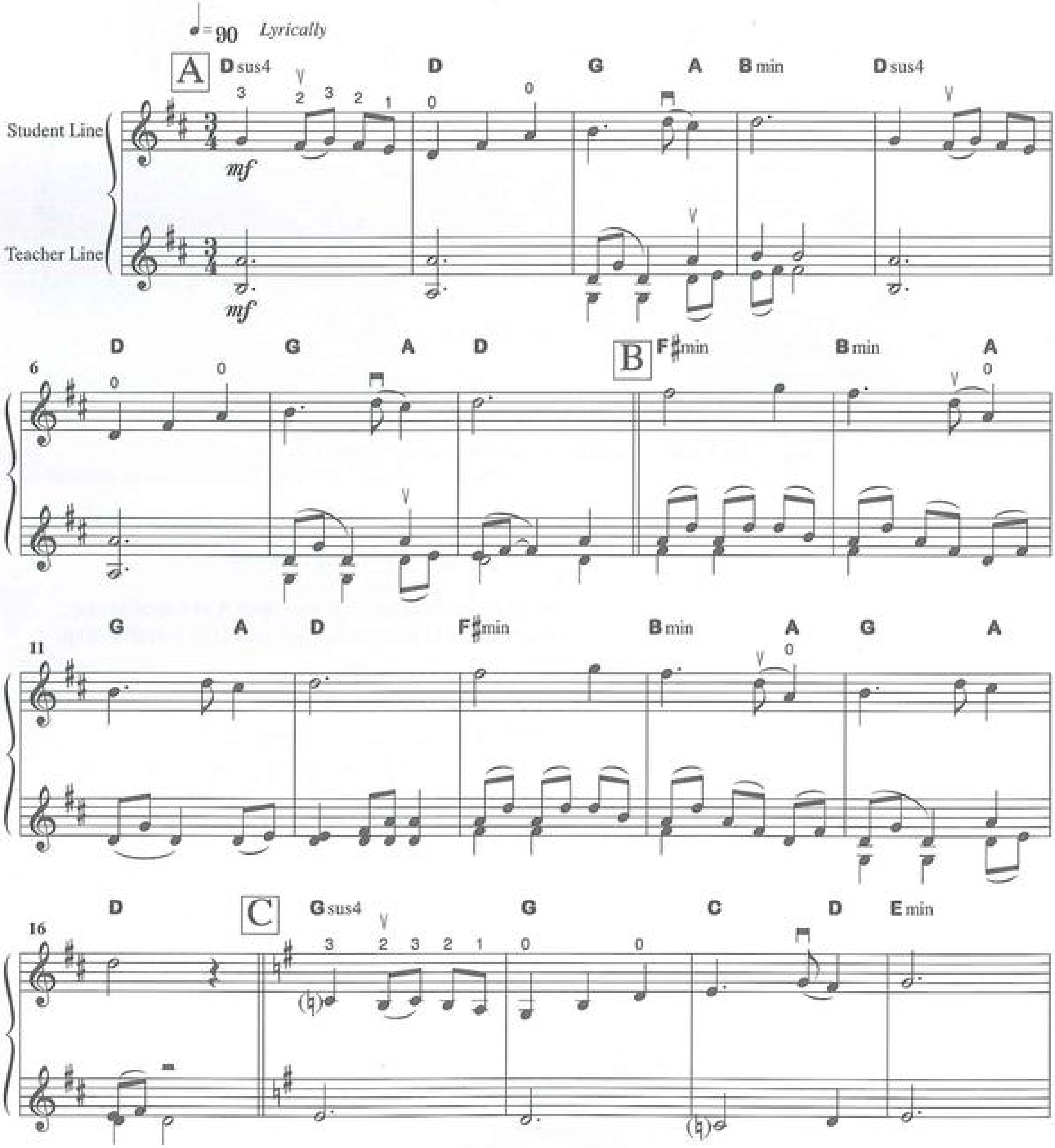


Appalachia Waltz

Book I
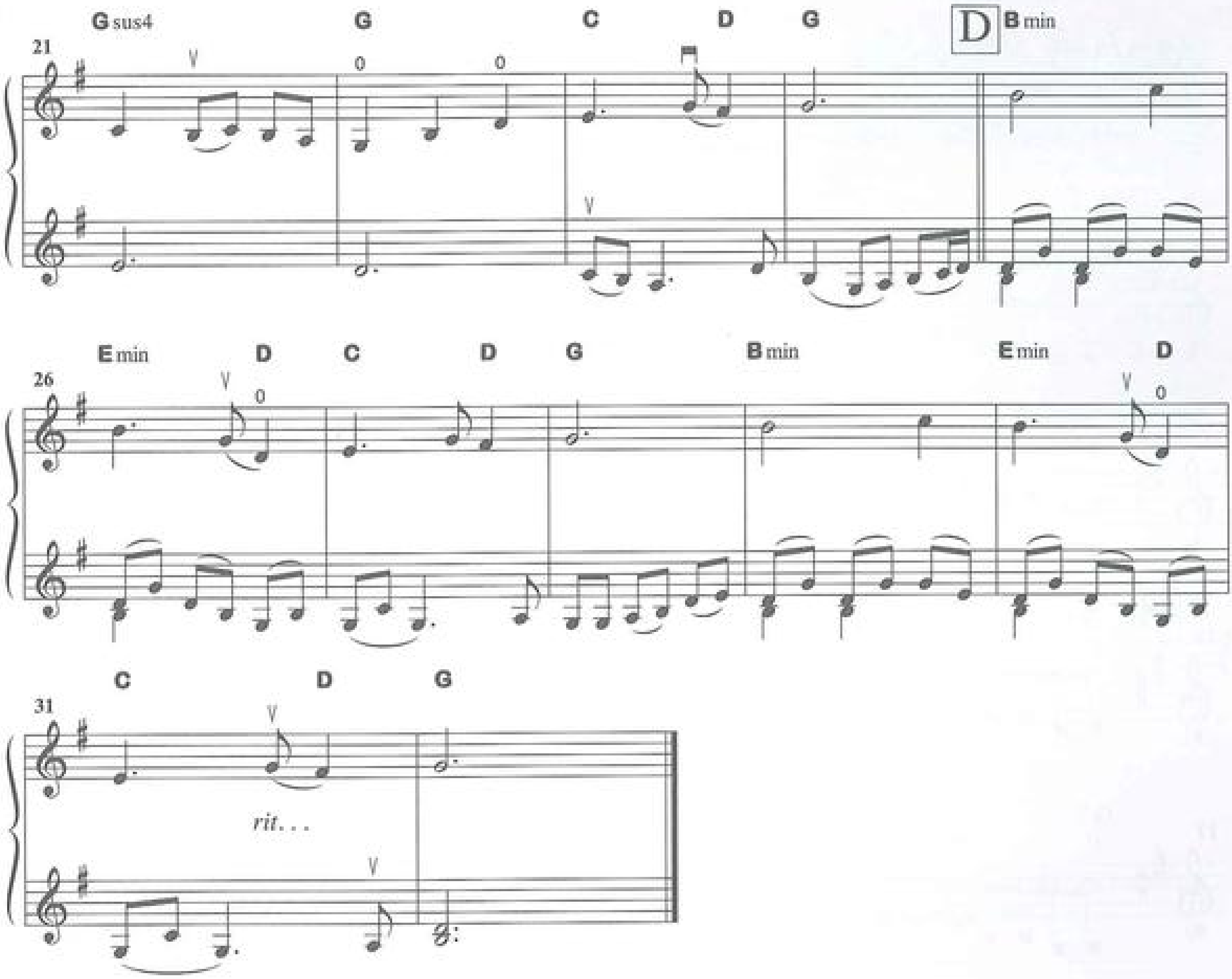
(Duet)

Mark O'Connor



Appalachia Waltz *continued*

(Duet)
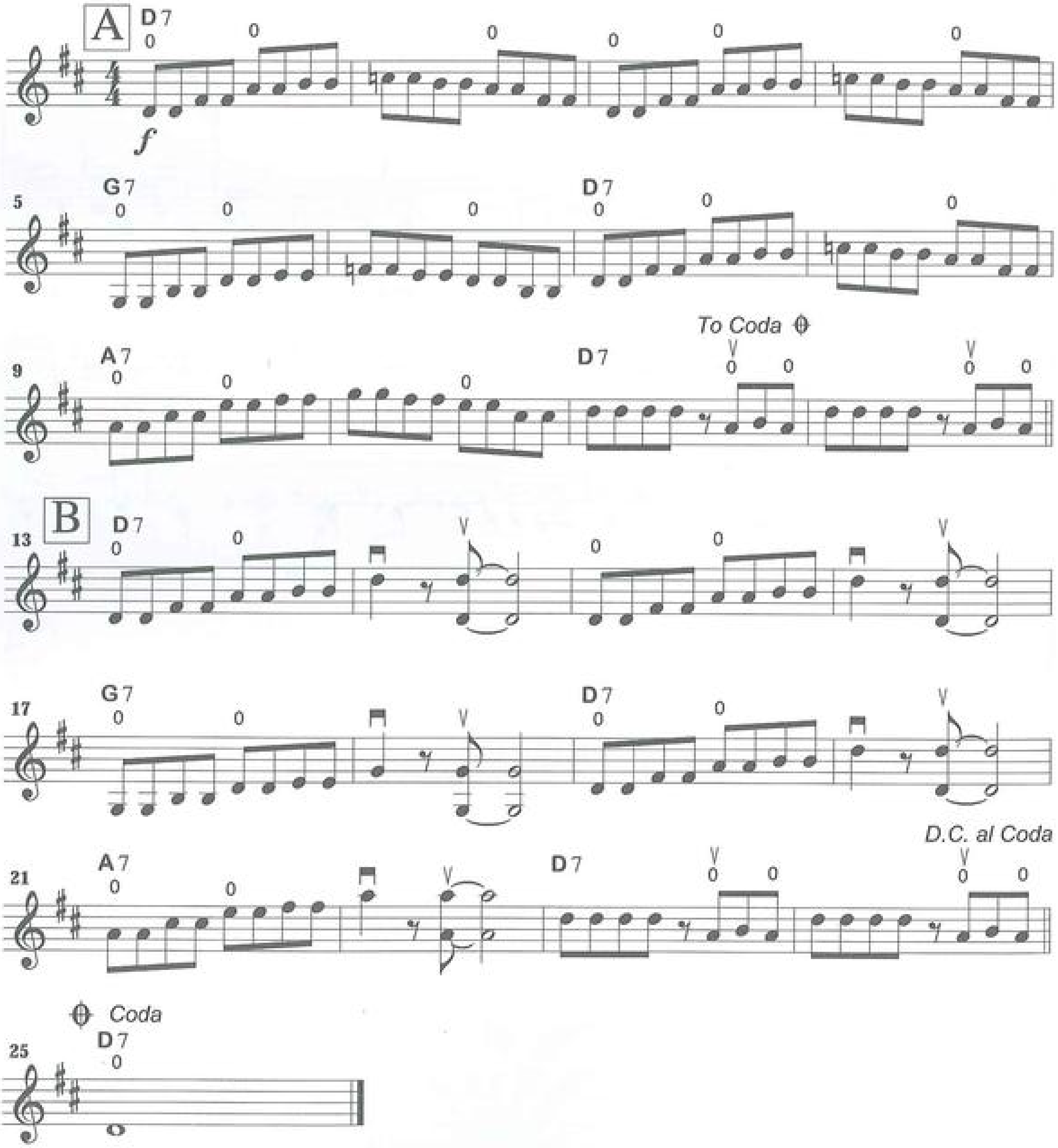


Boogie Woogie

Book I

Mark O'Connor

Violin-Track 17
Piano-Track 40

With Energy
♩ = 140 (play straight - do not swing the eighth notes)
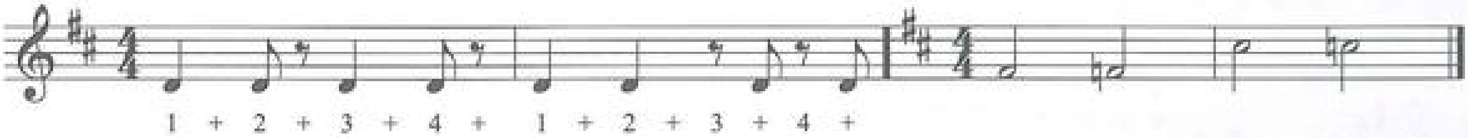




I like playing guitar, too. One of my favorite musical discoveries was how guitar music could be played on the violin. A lot of people "boogie" on the guitar, and I wanted to create the same feel on the violin. So I figured out a violin version of a "Boogie Woogie."

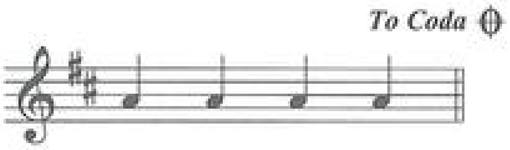
When I go outside and kick a ball around, sometimes I try to kick it right down the middle of the road. It's fun just boogieing on down the road.



Theory: Ex. 1 - **Eighth rests** (𝄾) receive a half beat of rest.
Ex. 2 - **Natural signs** (♮) cancel a sharp or a flat and last for the entire measure.

Ex. 1 Ex. 2





Ex. - A **Coda** is an ending section of a piece. **To Coda** (𝄌) indicates to jump to the *coda* the last time through the section.



Ear Training/Improvisation: Play the D scale in Example 1, followed by the *Boogie Woogie* scale in Example 2. How do they differ? Create your own melody using the *Boogie Woogie* scale.

Ex. 1: D Major Scale Ex. 2 : Boogie Woogie Scale
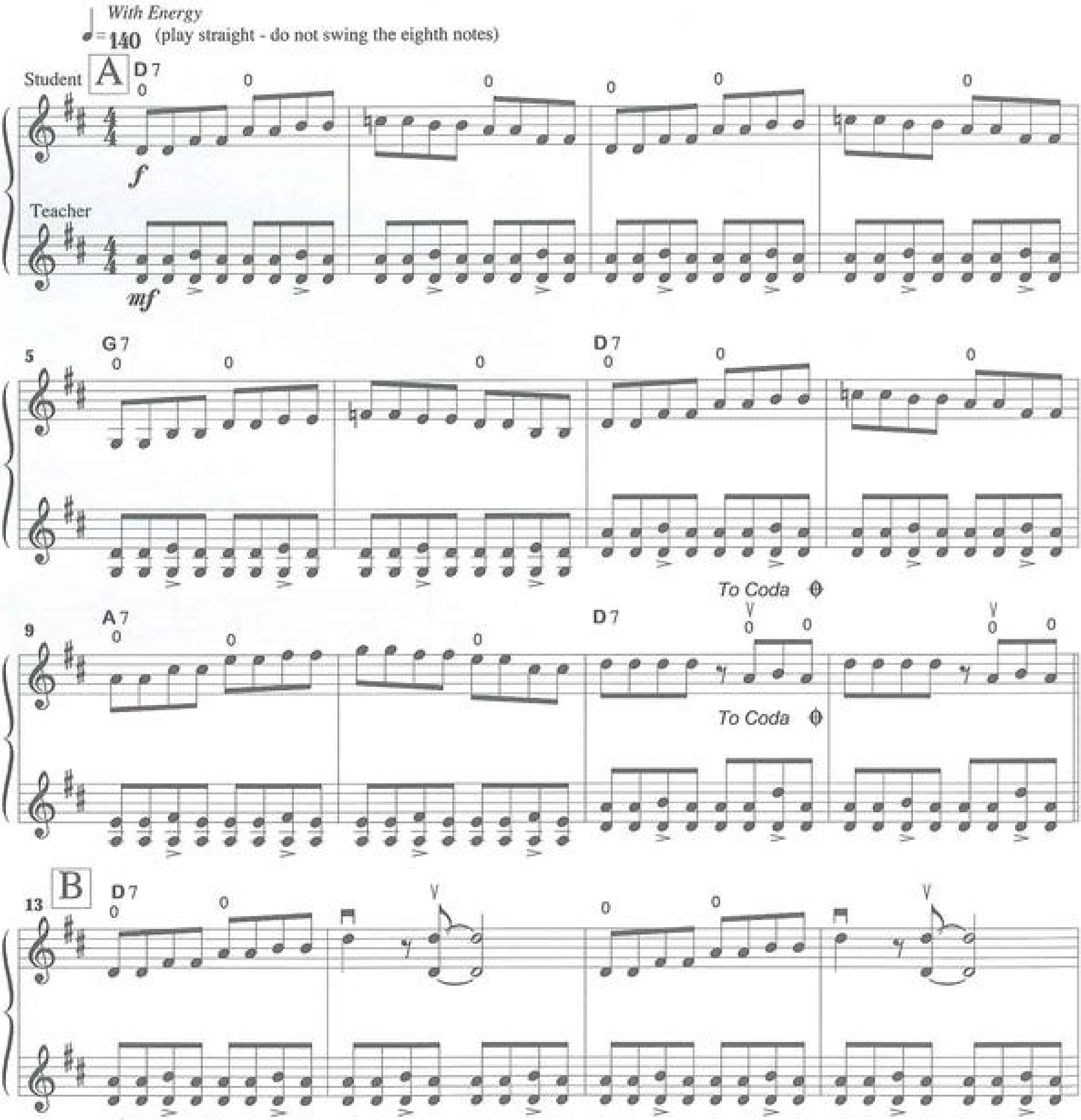


Book I

Boogie Woogie
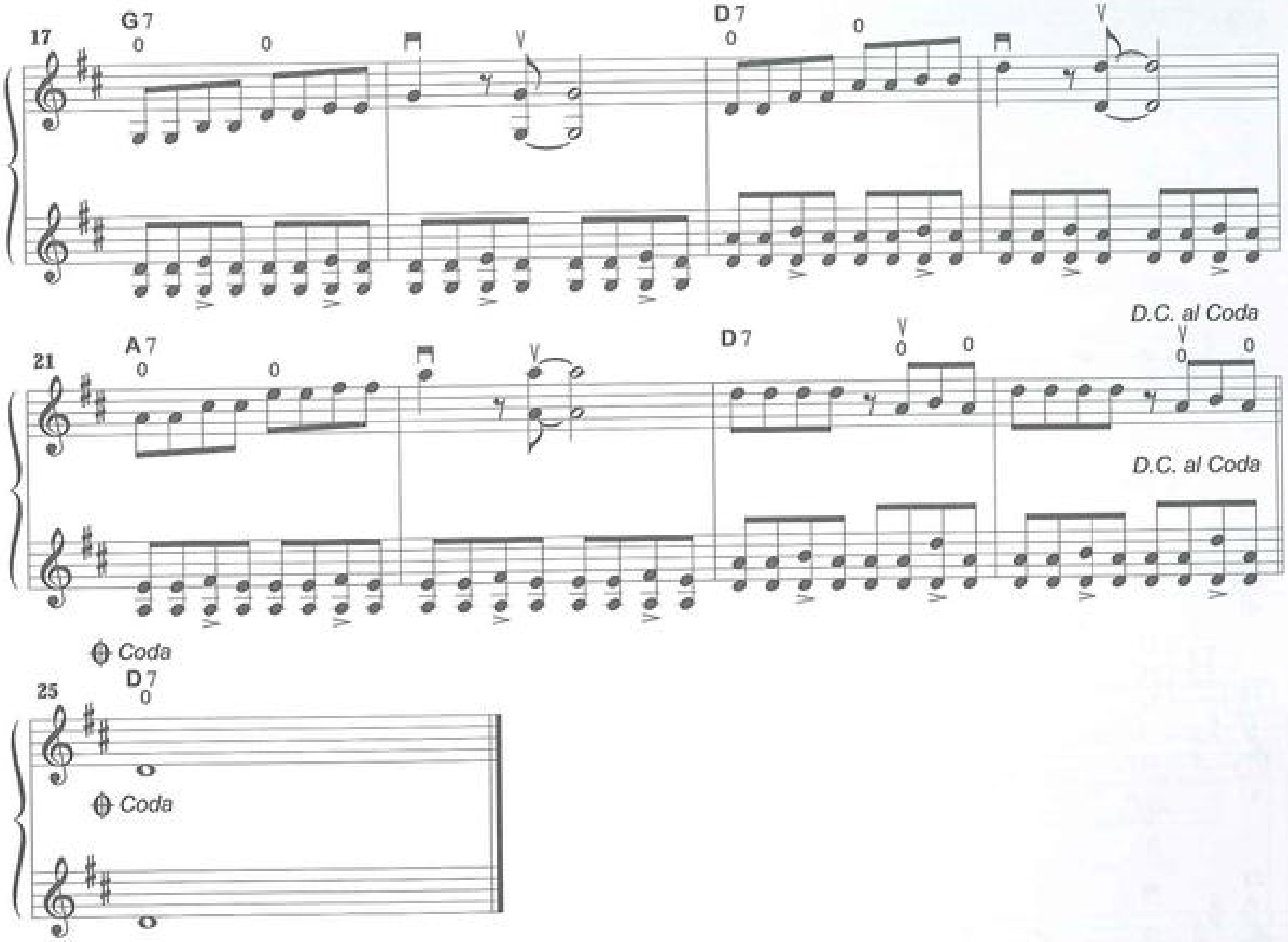
Mark O'Connor

(Duet)



Boogie Woogie *continued*

(Duet)
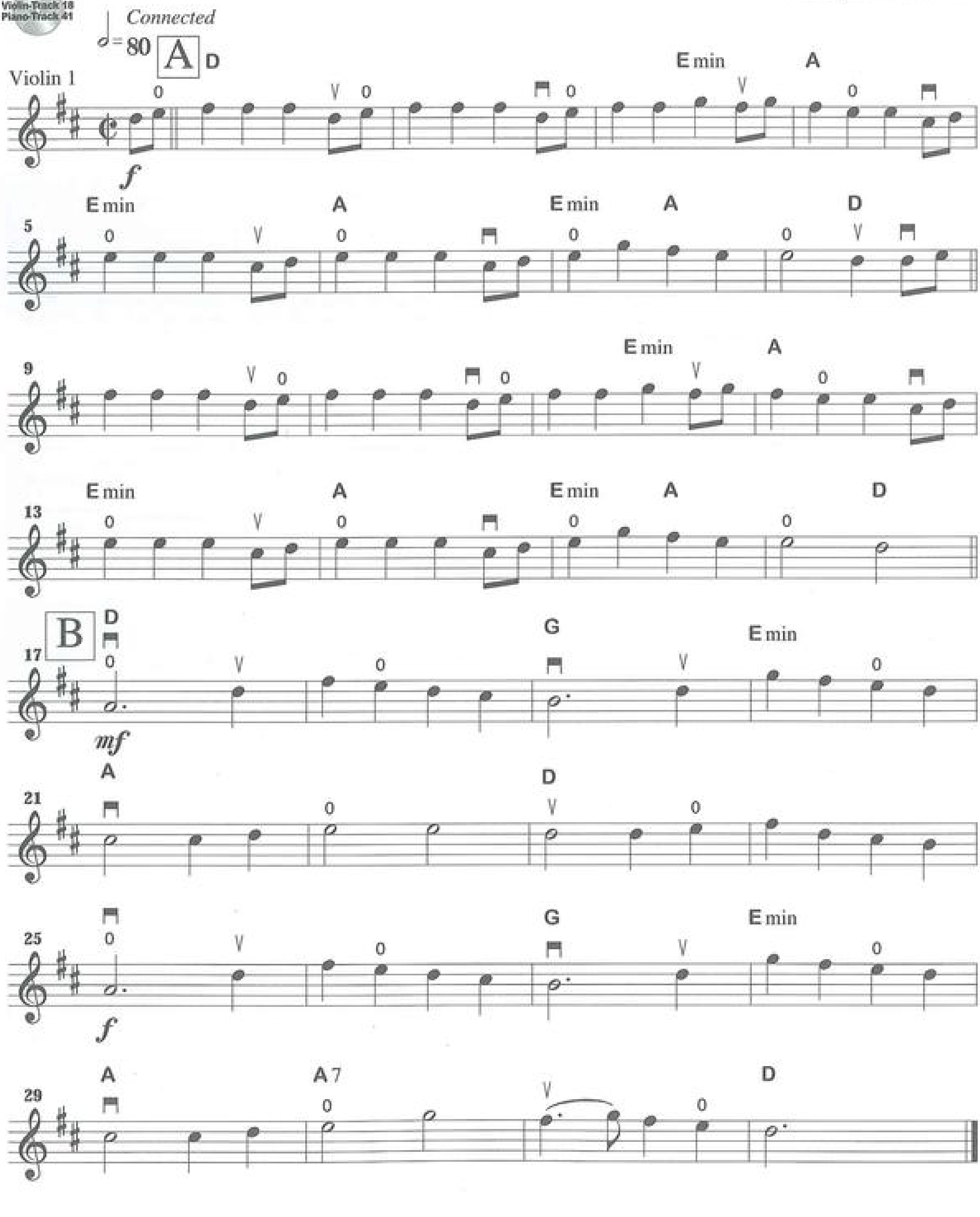


Golden Slippers

Book I

James Bland
Arr. by Mark O'Connor

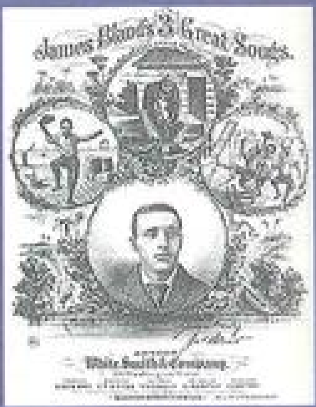
Violin-Track 18
Piano-Track 41



LEARNING GOLDEN SLIPPERS

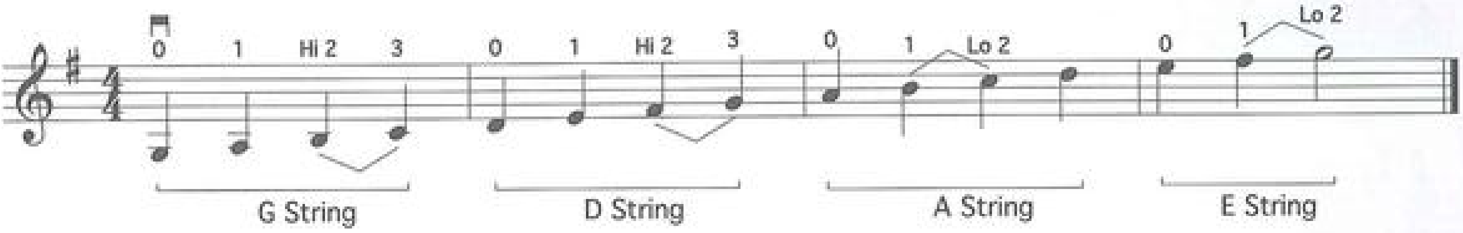


"Golden Slippers" was written in 1879 by African-American composer James A. Bland. The song's original title and lyric "Oh, Dem Golden Slippers," was originally popularized by traveling troupes of African American minstrels also known as "Georgia Minstrels." The composer, Bland, experienced slavery first-hand and also lived to see it outlawed after the Civil War. He wrote the song and lyrics during the post-War "reconstruction" period of American history.

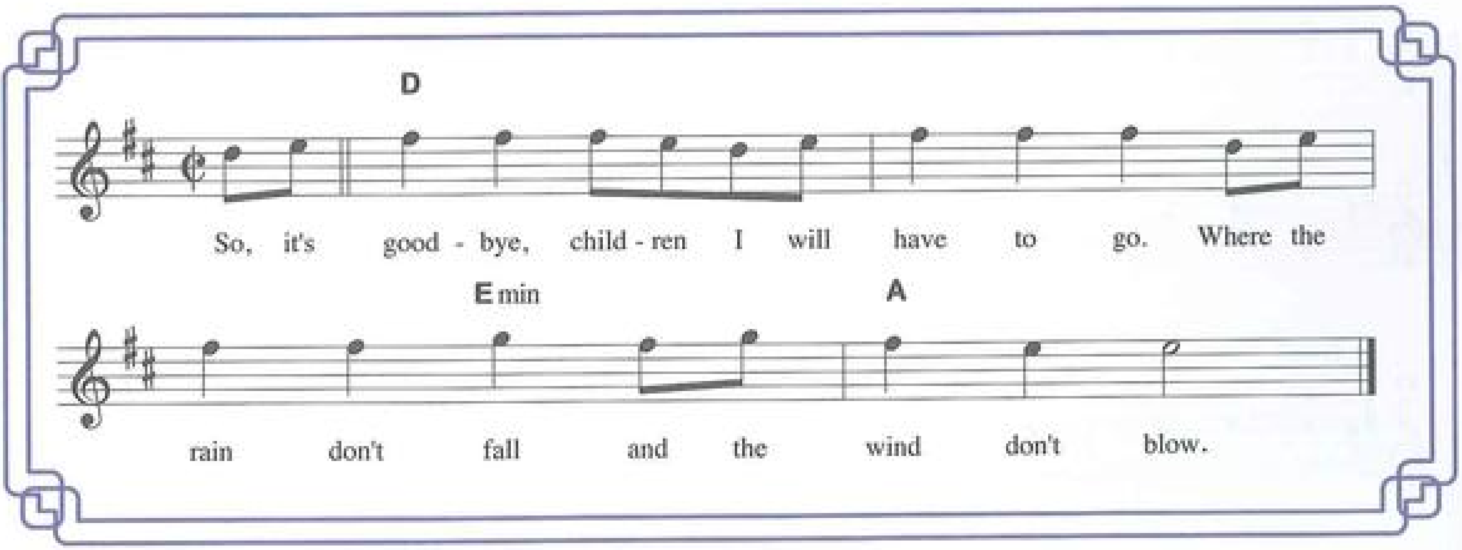


The lyrics speak of a man's prized possessions: a long-tailed coat, a white robe, a banjo and, most importantly, golden slippers. The lyrics also present the image of going to heaven in a chariot, a conventional metaphor for escaping slavery.

Ear Training/Improvisation: Play the G major scale on the G and D strings, then on the A and E strings. Listen each time you use your 2nd finger, make sure your **Hi 2s** and **Lo 2s** are in tune.



VARIATION WITH ORIGINAL LYRICS
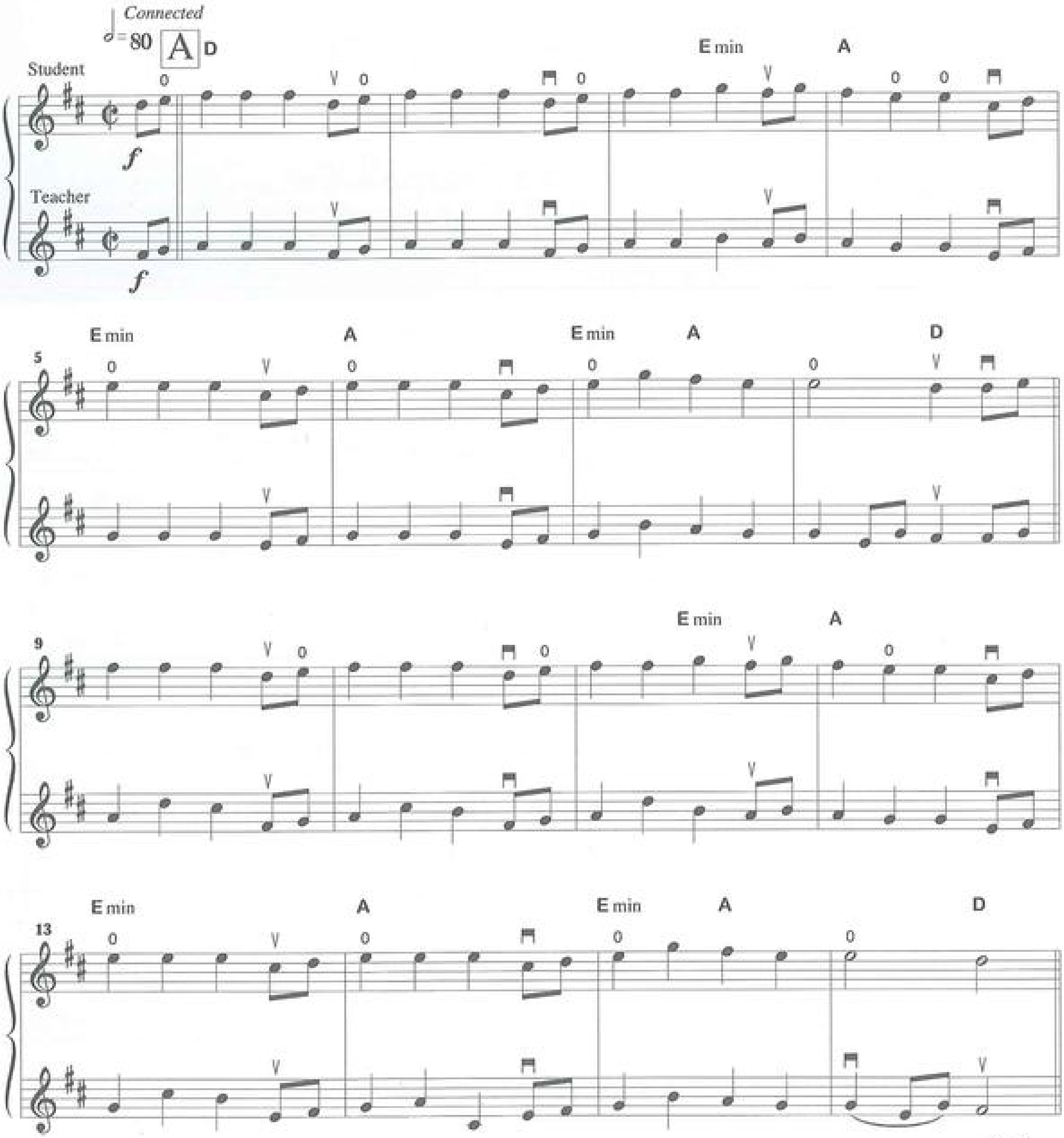




"What a great camp meetin' there will be that day, when we ride in the chariot with our golden slippers! I feel like celebrating!"

Golden Slippers

Book I

(Duet)
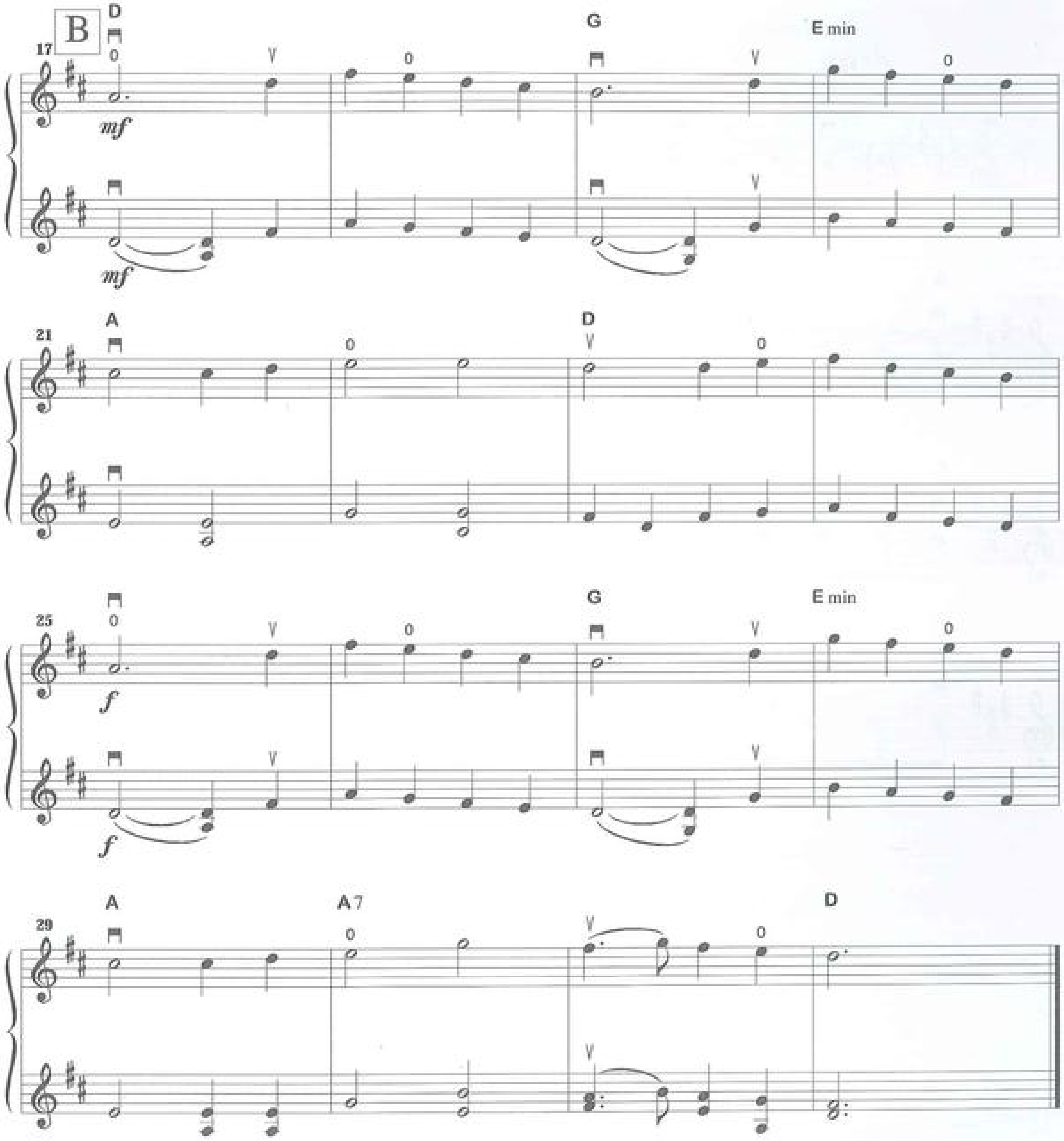
James Bland
Arr. by Mark O'Connor



Cont...

Golden Slippers *continued*

(Duet)
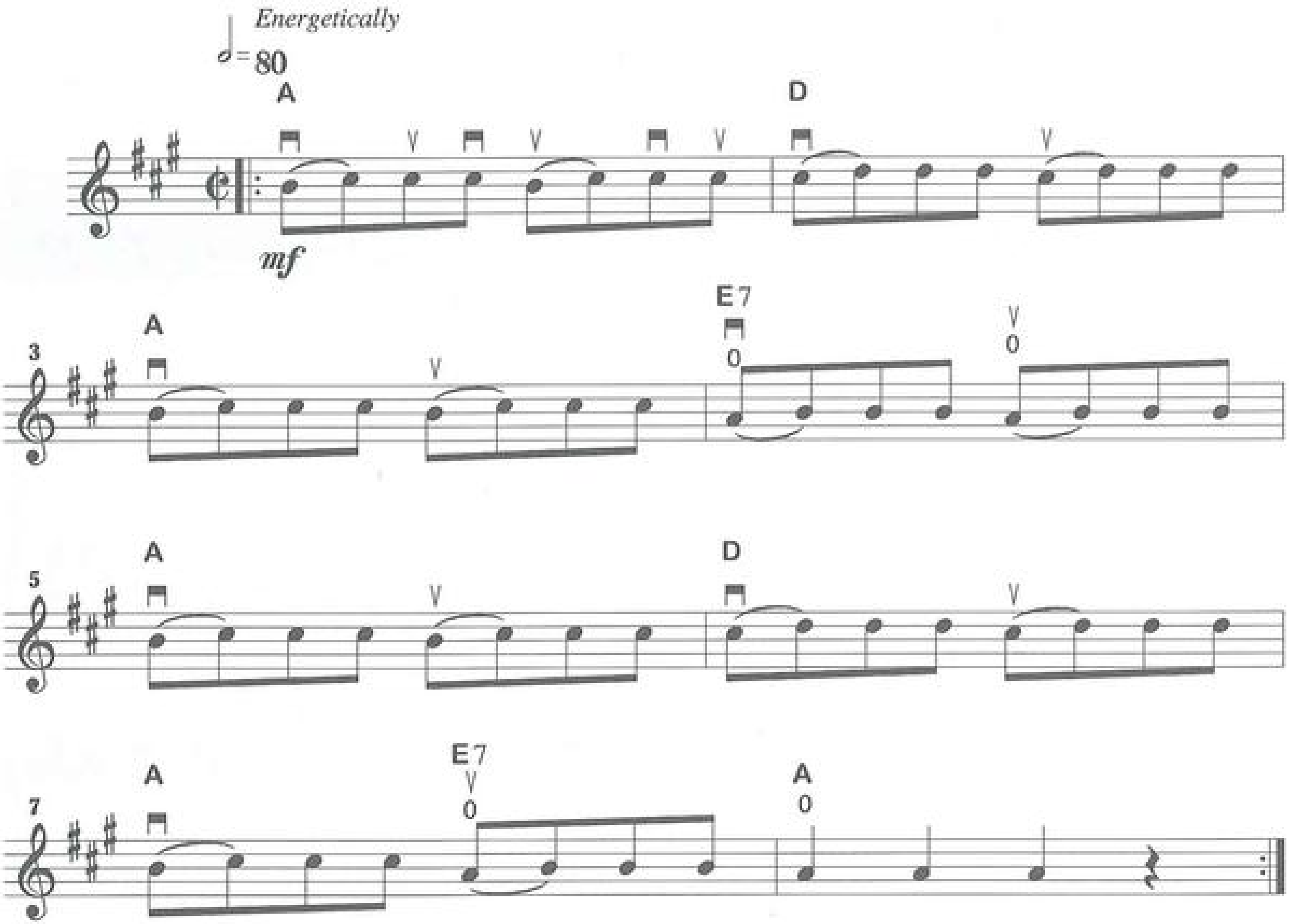


Boil `em Cabbage Down

Book I

Violin-Track 19
Piano-Track 42

(Variation 6)

American Folk Song
Arr. by Mark O'Connor
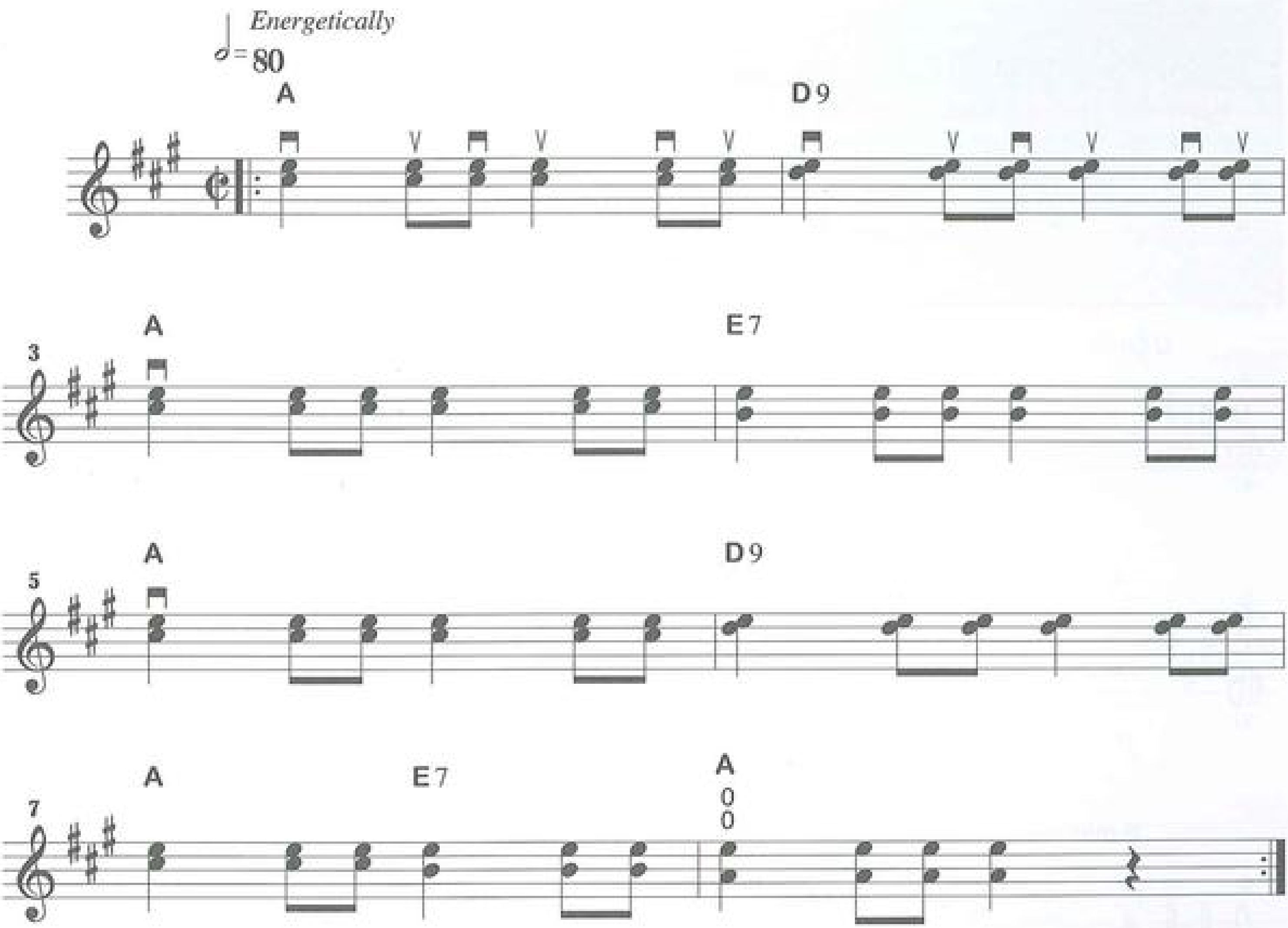


Boil `em Cabbage Down

Book I

Violin-Track 20
Piano-Track 43

(Variation 7)

American Folk Song
Arr. by Mark O'Connor
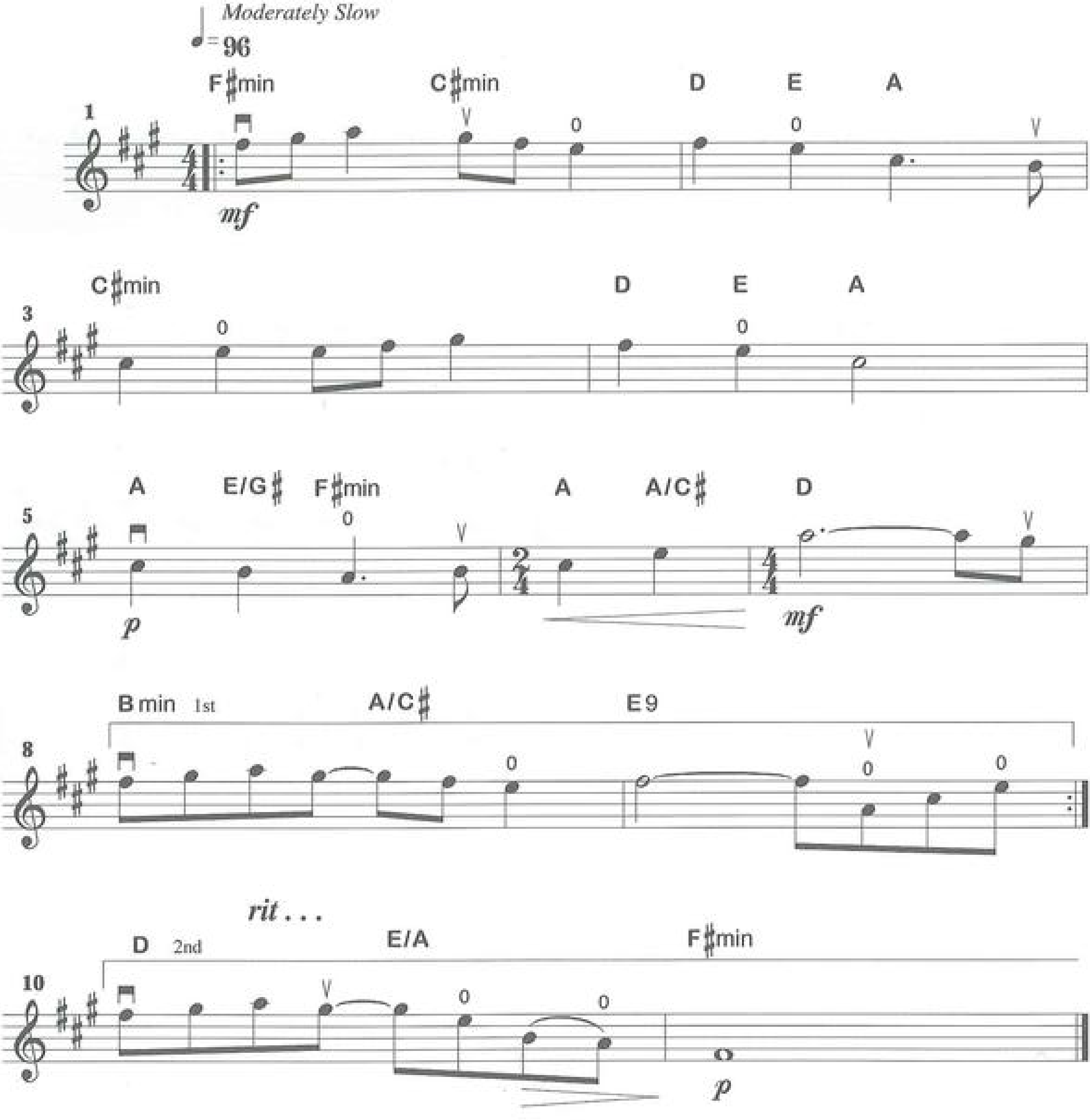


Johnny Has Gone for a Soldier

Book I

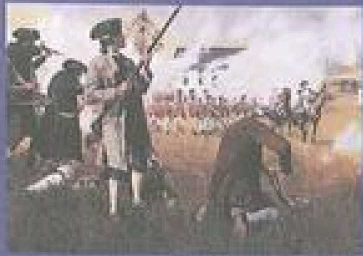
Violin-Track 21
Piano-Track 44

Traditional
Arr. by Mark O'Connor



LEARNING JOHNNY HAS GONE FOR A SOLDIER





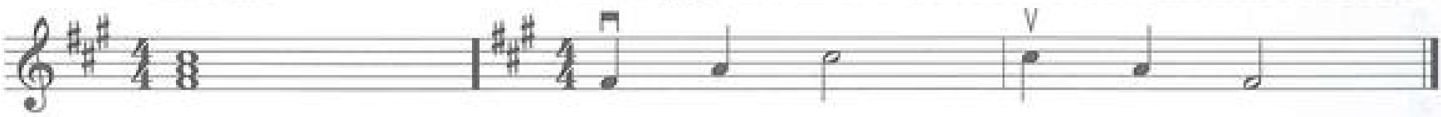
"Johnny Has Gone for a Soldier" is an American folk song that was popular during the American Revolutionary War. The lyrics speak of the sacrifices many a young woman made during that time: selling her spinning wheel to "buy her love a sword of steel." The melody is thought to have been an older Irish tune.

The American Revolution was bravely fought by many Americans, young and old, seeking independence from the King of England. Music written during this time has become important traditional music that continues to be embraced today. This observation was made by an American military leader about the American Militias who helped win the war: "What can you not achieve with such small bands who have learned to fight dispersed, who know how to use every molehill for their defense, and who retreat as quickly when attacked as they advance again?"

Key of "F#" Minor

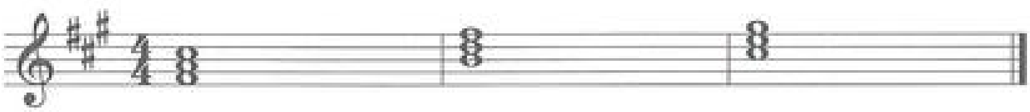
Theory: A **chord** is three or more notes sounded at the same time.
An **arpeggio** includes the notes of a chord played one after another.

F# Minor Chord F# Minor Arpeggio
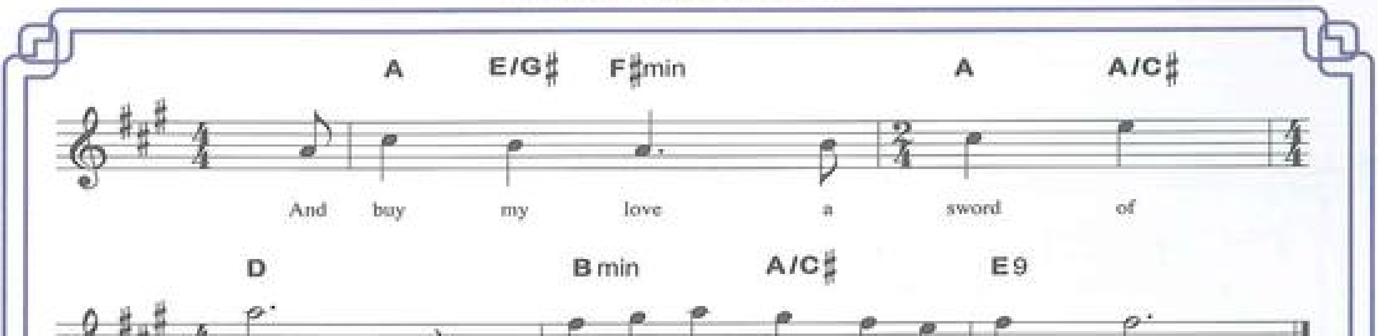


Ear Training/Improvisation: Play each **chord** as an **arpeggio.**

F# Minor Chord B Minor Chord C# Minor Chord



VARIATION WITH ORIGINAL LYRICS
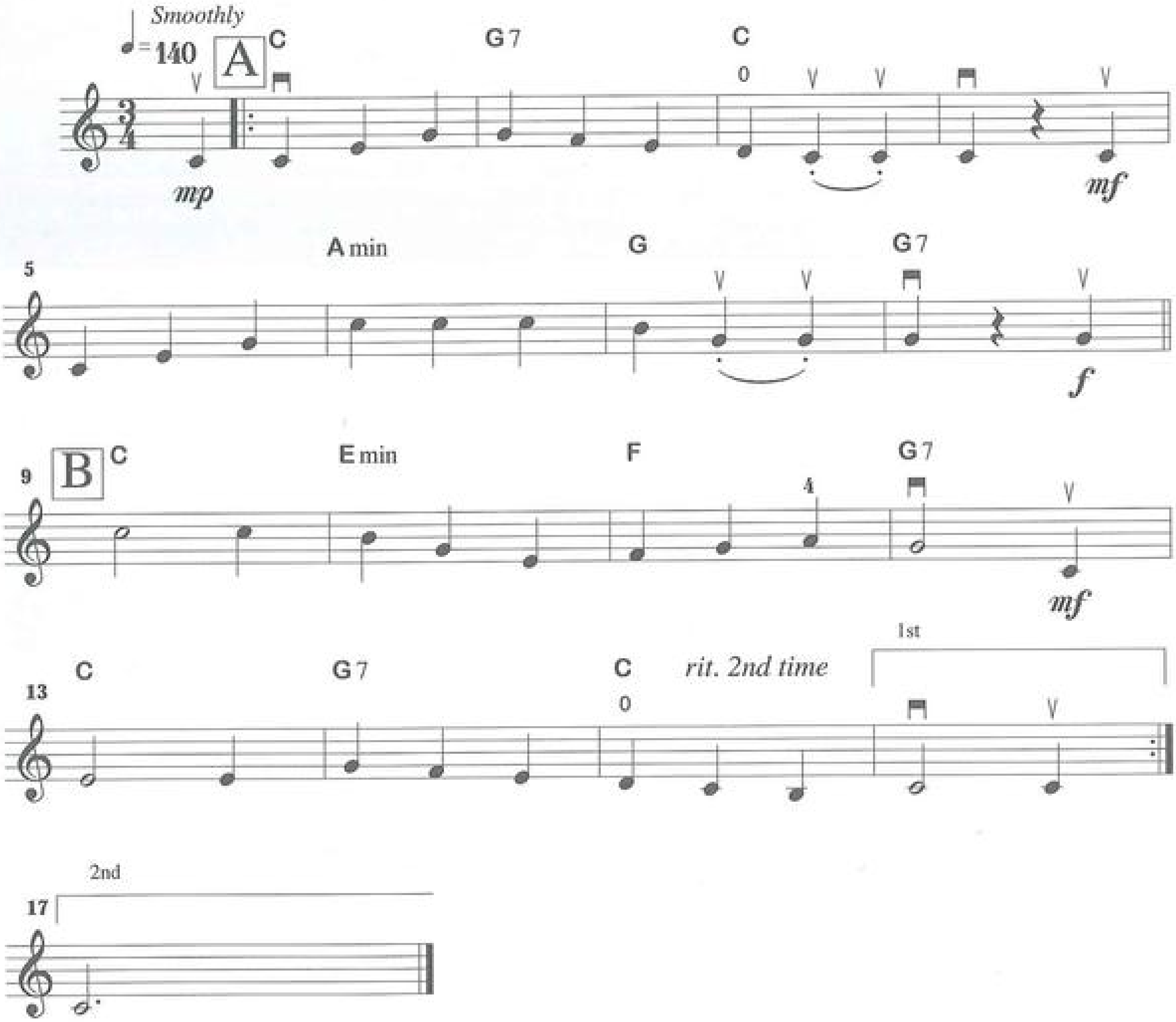




"And every tear would turn a mill. Johnny has gone for a soldier. I will play this melody as a lament. She misses Johnny so much!"

Sweet Betsy from Pike

Book I

Violin-Track 22
Piano-Track 45

Traditional
Arr. by Mark O'Connor



LEARNING SWEET BETSY FROM PIKE

"Sweet Betsy from Pike" is a song about two young "forty-niners" traveling from Pike County, Missouri, to the gold fields of California. In 1849, word traveled across the country that there was a fortune to be found in California's Sierra Mountains. Thousands of people left their homes and endured tremendous hardships journeying west to look for gold. The lyrics to this song describe many of the troubles typically encountered by the "forty-niners."





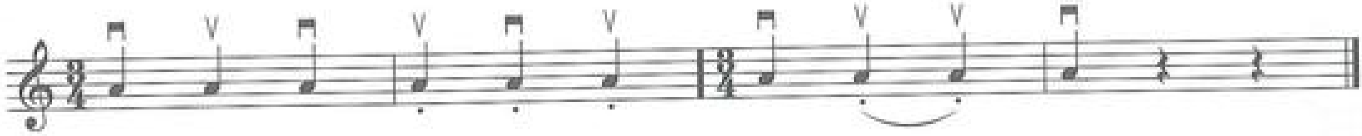
The song's author is unknown, but the lyrics may have been written by John A. Stone. Stone, also known as "Old Put," was a San Francisco entertainer who wrote, adapted and collected songs about the gold miners of that time. The melody is most likely a variation of a tune originally from Ireland. The hard times described in the song become especially poignant when, after all of their trials and tribulations during their journey west, Betsy and Ike do not end up together as a couple.

Key of "C" Major

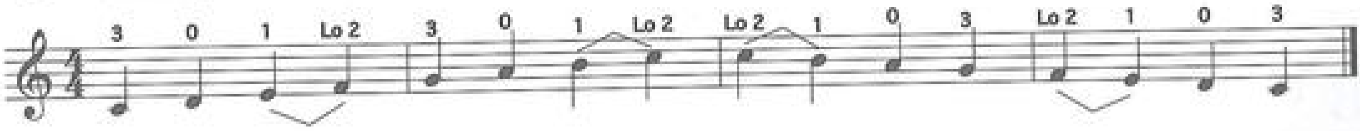
Theory: The **C major key signature** has no sharps or flats.

Bow Development: Ex. 1 - **Staccato** (•) is an articulation that indicates the note to be played short and detached by stopping or lifting the bow. The staccato marking is placed above or below the note.
Ex. 2 - Perform a **hooked bow** by playing two up bows in a row, stopping the bow between each note.

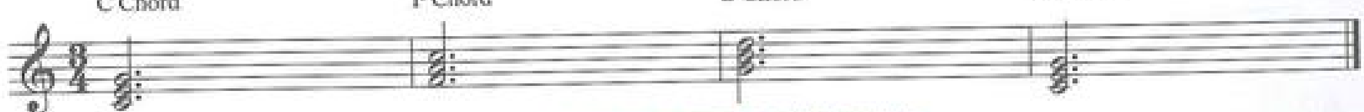
Ex. 1 Ex. 2



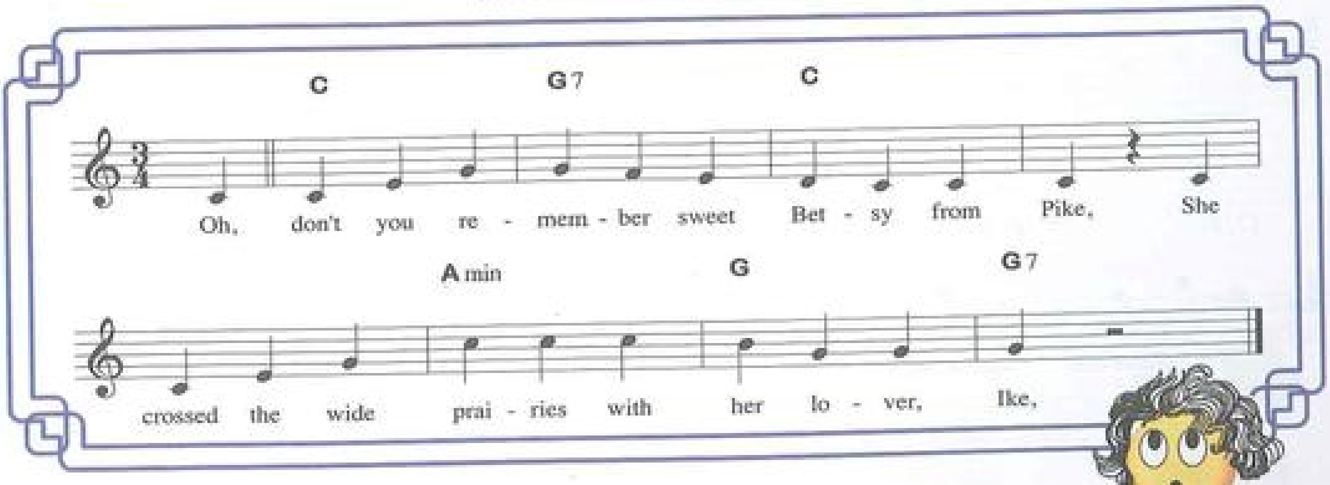
Finger Development: Play the **C major scale.**



Ear Training/Improvisation: Play each **chord** as an **arpeggio.**



VARIATION WITH ORIGINAL LYRICS
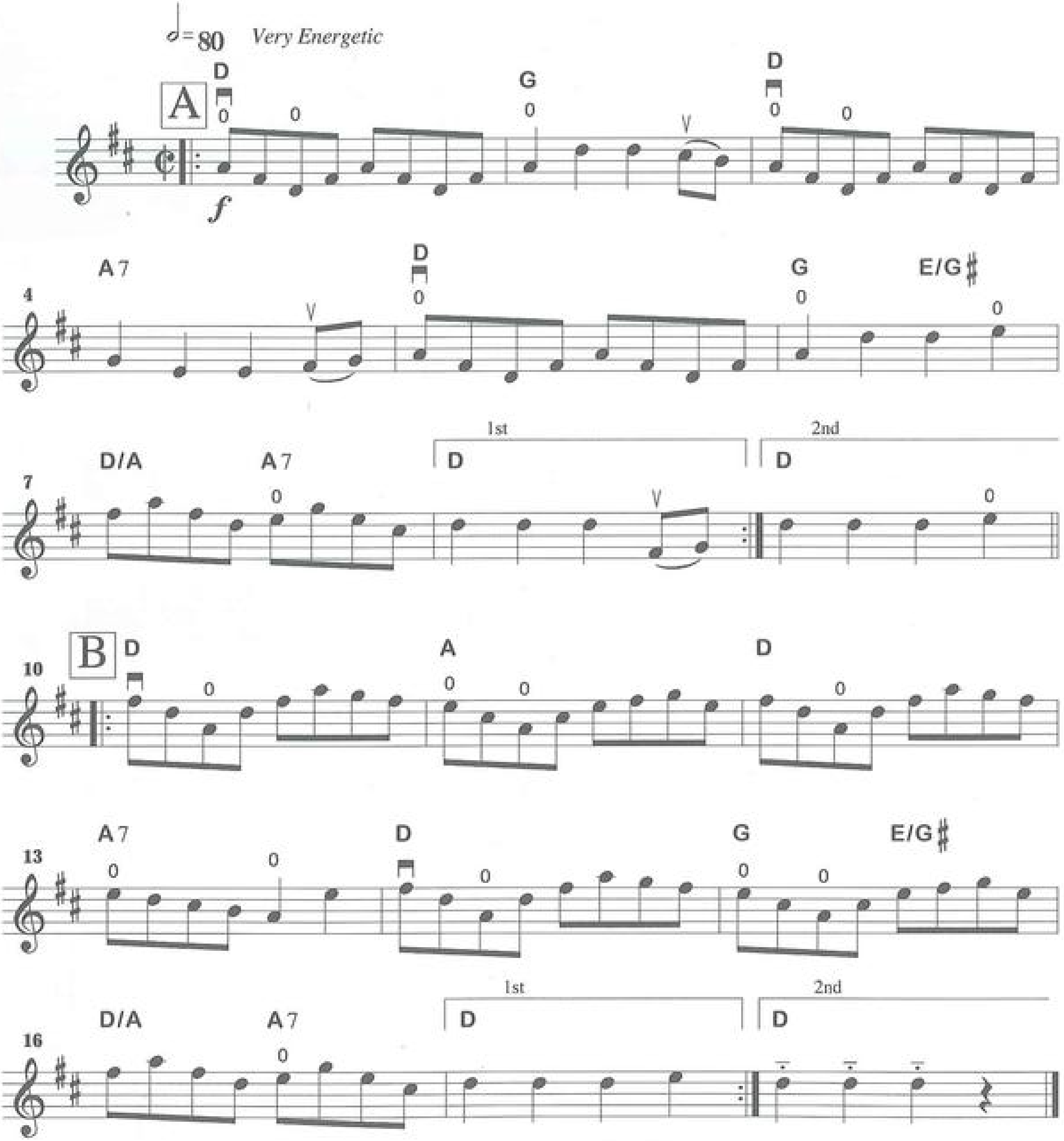




"The Shanghai ran off, and the cattle all died. That morning the last piece of bacon was fried. The dog drooped his tail and looked wonderfully sad."

Soldier's Joy

Book I

Violin-Track 23
Piano-Track 46

Traditional
Arr. by Mark O'Connor



LEARNING SOLDIER'S JOY

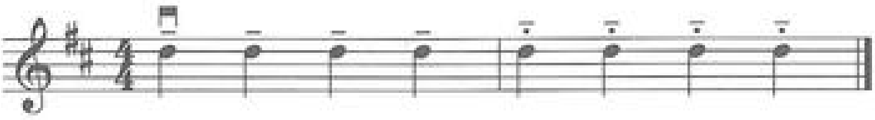
One of the most popular fiddle tunes in history, "Soldier's Joy" can be traced to collections published in London and Scandinavia in the middle 1700s. Early versions can be traced to Scotland, and variants found in the French Alps and Newfoundland. The tune was also well known in Ireland.



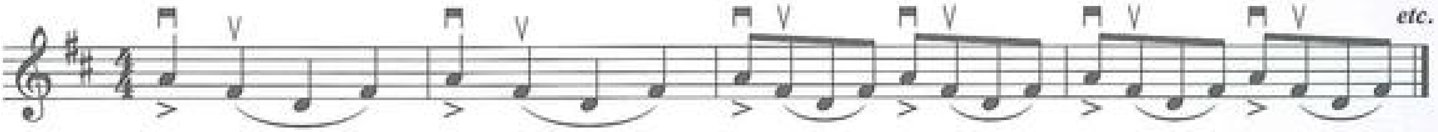


As is the case with many fiddle tunes, lyrics were added later. In America, "Soldier's Joy" eventually came to be known as the morphine used by Civil War soldiers when they were injured in battle. A popular lyric for the tune was: "Twenty-five cents for the old morphine, now carry me away from here."

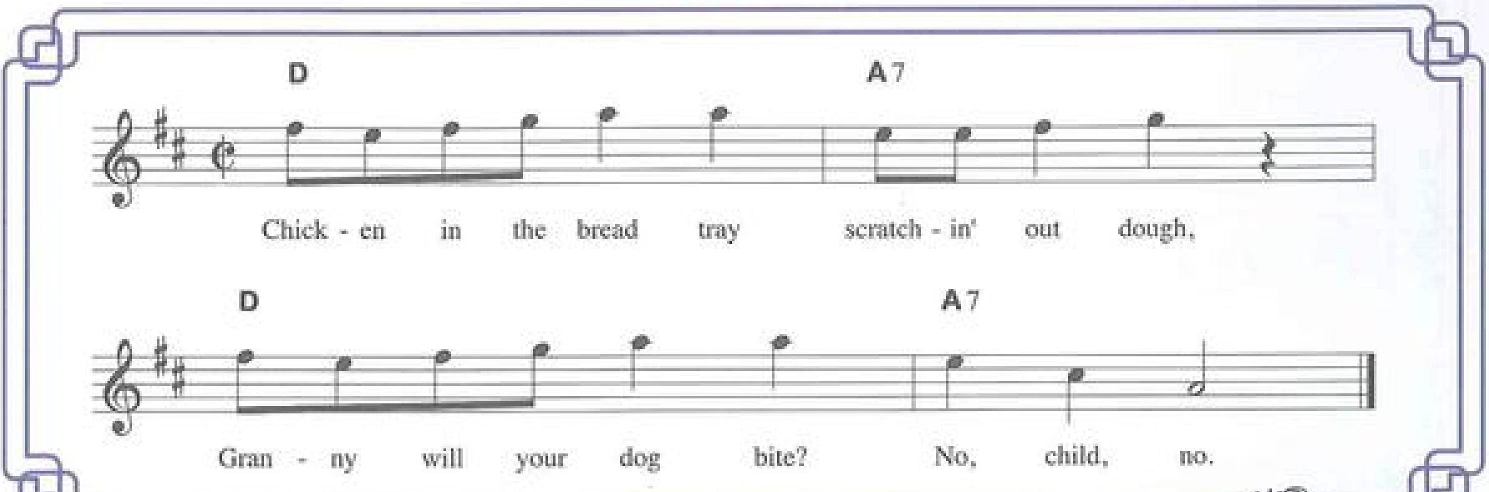
Bow Development: The combination **tenuto** and **staccato** mark is played detached and slightly longer than a staccato mark. Tenuto (–) means to hold a note for its full value with slight separation in between each note. Staccato (•) means to play the note half as long.



Ear Training/Improvisation: After you learn *Soldier's Joy*, play it by slurring within each set of four notes.



VARIATION WITH ORIGINAL LYRICS
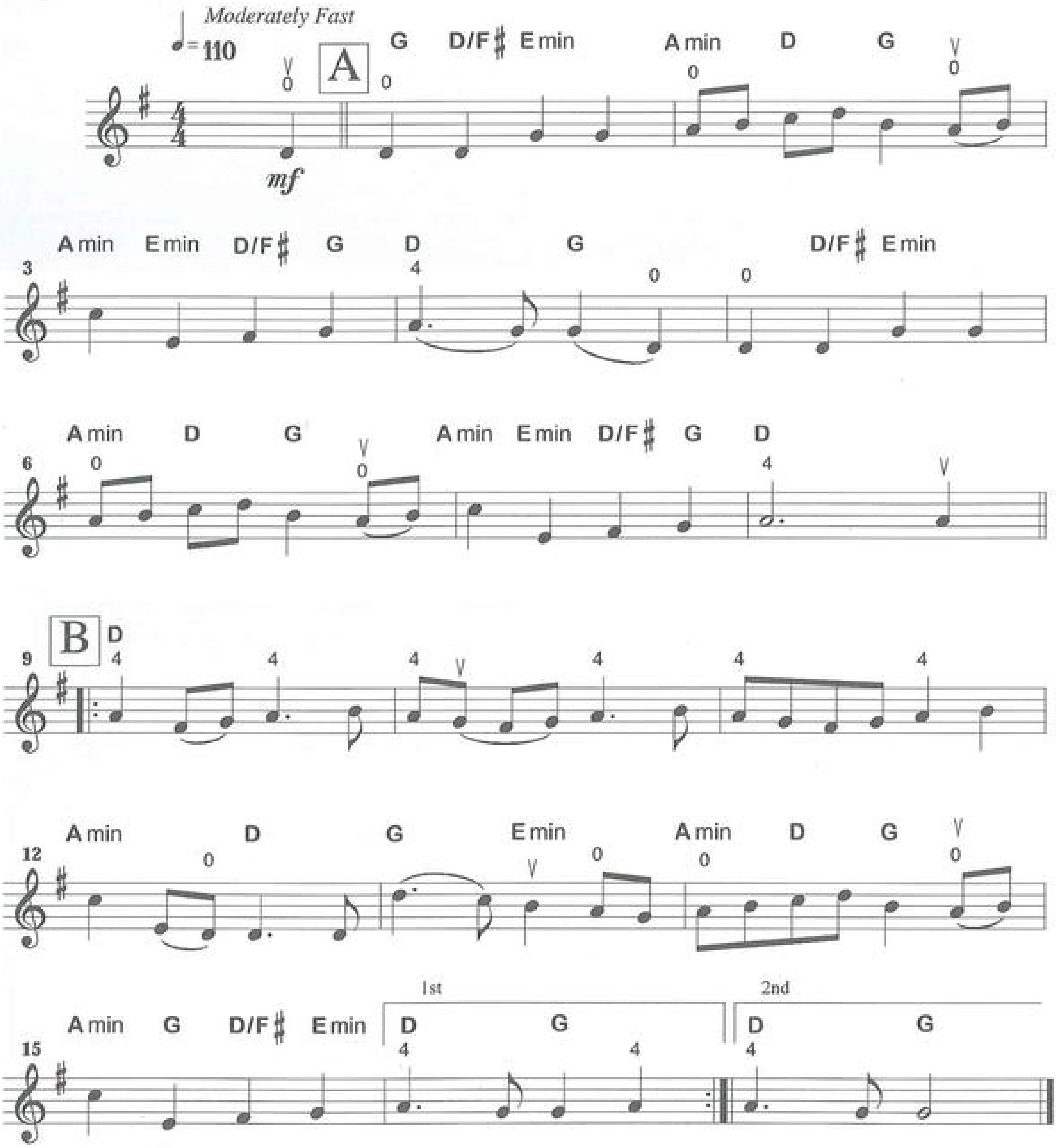




"A cigar box was sometimes used as a fiddle by soldiers to play this tune during the Civil War. Times were very tough, and this music lifted everyone's spirits. It's joyful to play and to hear!"

The World Turned Upside Down

Book I

Violin Track 24
Piano Track 47

Traditional
Arr. by Mark O'Connor



LEARNING THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

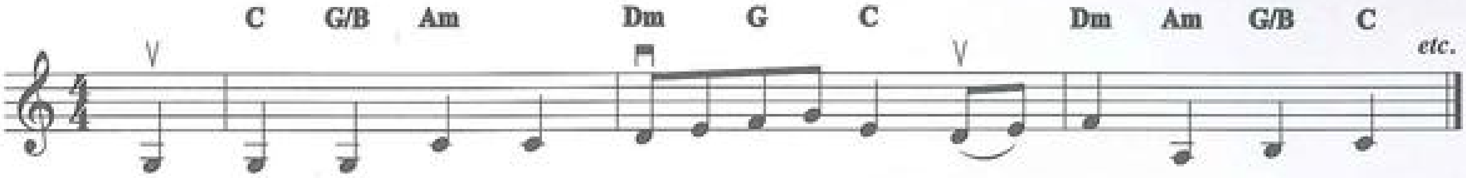
"The World Turned Upside Down" is an English Ballad also known by the title "When the King Enjoys His Own Again." It was first published in 1643 as a protest against Oliver Cromwell's attempt to ban Christmas celebrations.



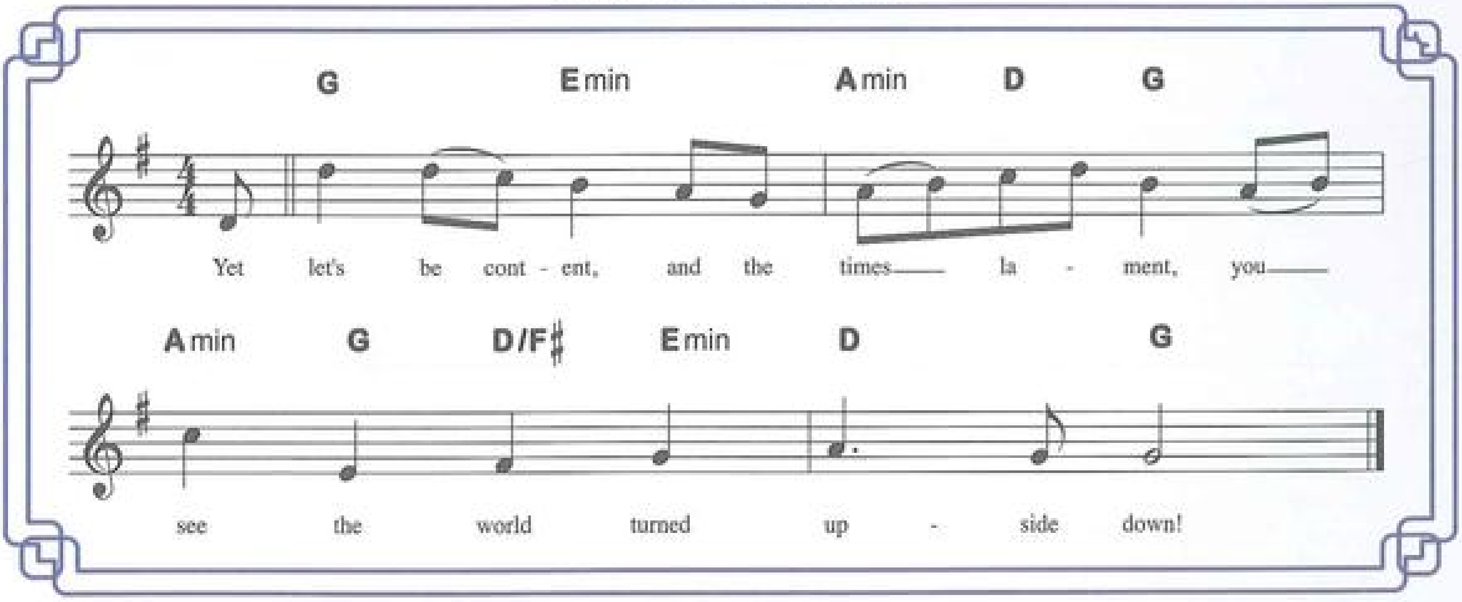


Legend has it that when Lord Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown, Virginia in 1781, signaling the end of the American Revolution, the British band played this tune. Aedanus Burke vividly describes the atmosphere created by the music at Yorktown: "They marched thro' both Armies at a slow pace, and to the sound of music, not military marches, but of certain airs, which had in them so peculiar a strain of melancholy."

Ear Training/Improvisation: After you learn *The World Turned Upside Down*, shift your fingers down one string and start the tune on the G string. Use the same fingering to play it, now in the **key of C**. The music on the "bigger" strings sounds lower in pitch and darker, warmer and more somber in character.



VARIATION WITH ORIGINAL LYRICS



"Old Christmas is kicked out of town. That means that in the 1600s, there wouldn't have been any Christmas trees or Christmas presents! I'm glad we have music. Music is such a gift."

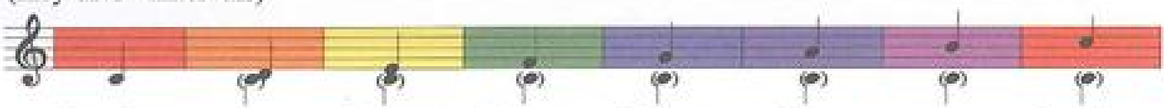


SCALES AND INTERVALS INCLUDED IN BOOKS I & II

The Rainbow

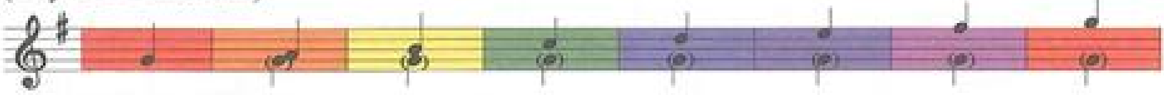
Degree	Solfège	Color
7th Degree	Ti	Violet
6th Degree	La	Indigo
5th Degree	Sol	Blue
4th Degree	Fa	Green
3rd Degree	Mi	Yellow
2nd Degree	Re	Orange
1st Degree = Home	Do	Red

(Key of C - Intervals)



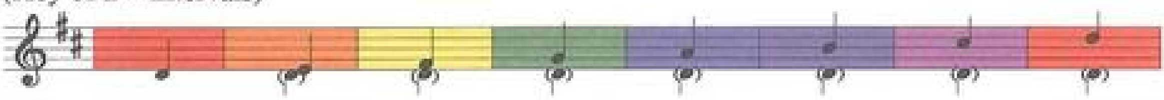
One - Home · 2nd degree · 3rd degree · 4th degree · 5th degree · 6th degree · 7th degree · One - Home

(Key of G - Intervals)



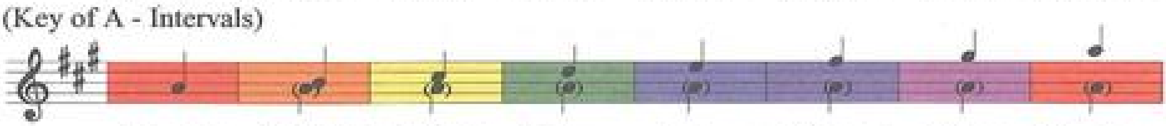
One - Home · 2nd degree · 3rd degree · 4th degree · 5th degree · 6th degree · 7th degree · One - Home

(Key of D - Intervals)



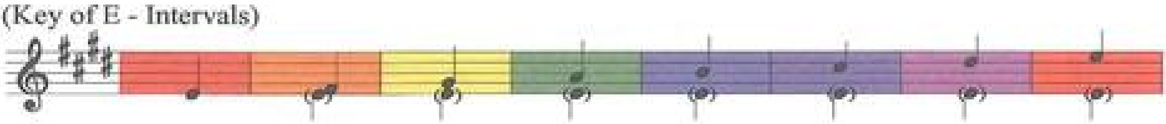
One - Home · 2nd degree · 3rd degree · 4th degree · 5th degree · 6th degree · 7th degree · One - Home

(Key of A - Intervals)



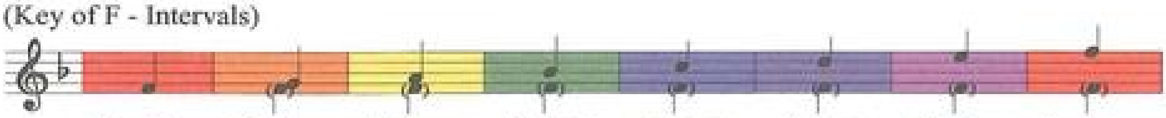
One - Home · 2nd degree · 3rd degree · 4th degree · 5th degree · 6th degree · 7th degree · One - Home

(Key of E - Intervals)



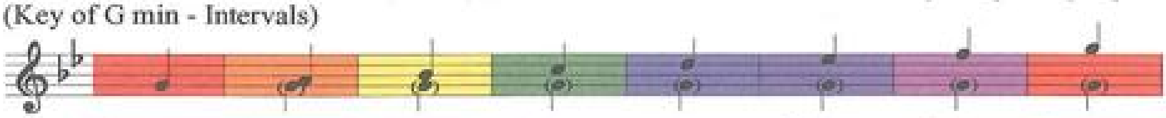
One - Home · 2nd degree · 3rd degree · 4th degree · 5th degree · 6th degree · 7th degree · One - Home

(Key of F - Intervals)



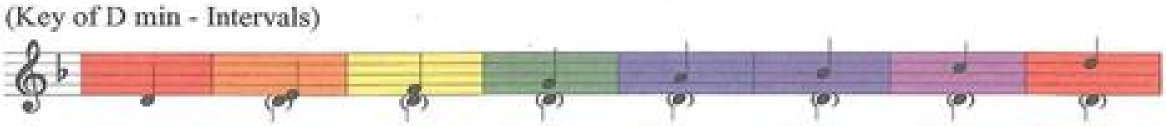
One - Home · 2nd degree · 3rd degree · 4th degree · 5th degree · 6th degree · 7th degree · One - Home

(Key of G min - Intervals)



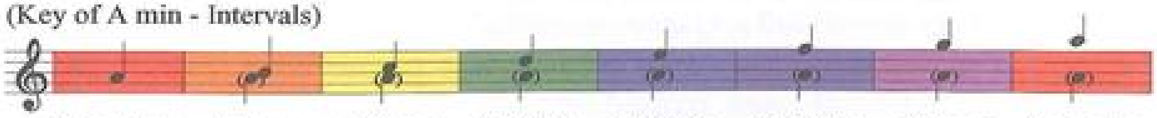
One - Home · 2nd degree · 3rd degree · 4th degree · 5th degree · 6th degree · 7th degree · One - Home

(Key of D min - Intervals)



One - Home · 2nd degree · 3rd degree · 4th degree · 5th degree · 6th degree · 7th degree · One - Home

(Key of A min - Intervals)



One - Home · 2nd degree · 3rd degree · 4th degree · 5th degree · 6th degree · 7th degree · One - Home